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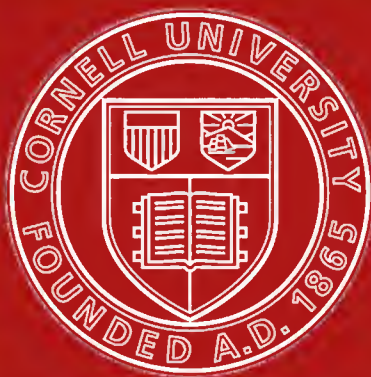
Papers relating to the loss of Minorca i



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PAPERS RELATING TO THE
LOSS OF MINORCA IN 1756

PAPERS RELATING TO
The Loss of Minorca
IN 1756

EDITED BY
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INTRODUCTION

AFTER the Trial of Admiral Byng for his share in the loss of Minorca, public feeling in the country ran so high that an enquiry was called for. It was suggested that the squadron under Byng should have sailed earlier and have been of greater strength, and the following papers constitute a draft of the defence which the Administration prepared to meet these charges. Two copies of the papers have been found: an incomplete one in the Admiralty Library, and another in the British Museum (Addl. MS. 31959), which formed part of Lord Hardwicke's collection. Both are in clerkly handwriting.

The papers give a general outline of the orders issued when Minorca was reported to be threatened, followed by remarks on the situation (though there appears to be no evidence as to the author of these remarks), and extracts from the various advices received as to preparations being made in France both on sea and on shore: and conclude with a summing up of the reasons that governed the policy of the Administration. The confusion produced by the simultaneous French demonstrations in the Atlantic and Mediterranean sea ports, the movements of the troops in all parts of France,

and the contradictory nature of the intelligence itself, is clearly brought out.

The advices gave out that troops were assembling both in the Channel ports and in the neighbourhood of Toulon. Their objective was unknown until the end of February 1756, and even then a considerable doubt existed as to whether the army near Toulon was really intended for Minorca or for America. The events in Canada which were at the bottom of the dispute between England and France, indicated that their destination was in the West. At the same time the information was received that a complete plan for the invasion of England had been formed which was to be combined with a diversion in Minorca. Alarm for the security of the kingdom, supplemented by fear of the effect of the outcry of the merchants for protection of their trade, led to a very large force being kept in the Channel or employed on convoy work, with the result that a squadron was not sent to observe Toulon in time to intercept the expeditionary force. Richelieu's army was in consequence able to leave Hières on the 12th April, 1756, and to reach Minorca without opposition of any kind.

Byng's instructions, dated 30th March, 1756, shew that the Administration did not believe that the force equipping at Toulon was really intended for Minorca, in spite of the very circumstantial information to that effect received in February. He was told in them that in consequence of advices received relating to the supposed intention of the French to attack Minorca, he was to put to sea

with as many of the ten ships ordered to be under his command as were ready, and proceed with the utmost despatch to Gibraltar : on arrival he was to enquire whether any French squadron had passed through the Straits,

‘ and as ’tis probable they may be designed for North America, and as his Majesty’s ships named in the margin [Grafton, Stirling Castle, Fougueux, Nottingham, Lichfield, Centurion, Norwich, Success, and Vulture sloop] are either at or going to Halifax, and are to cruise off Louisbourg and the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, you are immediately to take the soldiers out of so many of the ships of your squadron as, together with the ships at and going to Halifax will make a force superior to the said French Squadron (replacing them with landmen or ordinary seamen from your other ships), and then detach them under the command of Rear Admiral West, directing him to make the best of his way off Louisbourg . . . ’

where he was to cruise with the object of intercepting these French ships.

If, however, on his arrival at Gibraltar he found there no intelligence of a French squadron having passed the Straits, he was to proceed without a moment’s loss of time to Minorca ; and, if he should find the island attacked by the French, was to use all possible means in his power for its relief ; but if no such attack were yet made, he was to go to Toulon and lie off that port to prevent any French ships from leaving it, and protect Minorca and Gibraltar from any attempt, sending home a ‘ proportional part ’ of his ships if any French

vessels should successfully get away from his squadron.

It has been pointed out that Byng was a man very prone to see difficulties.¹ On his arrival at Gibraltar he received the news that the French had arrived at Minorca and landed their troops. Writing from Gibraltar on May 4th, 1756, he shewed that he considered he was going on a hopeless mission.

‘If I had been so happy [he says] to have arrived at Mahon before the French had landed, I flatter myself I should have been able to have prevented their getting a footing on that island: but as it has so unfortunately turned out, I am firmly of opinion from the great force they have landed, and the quantity of provisions, stores and ammunition of all kinds they brought with them, that the throwing men into the castle will only enable it to hold out but a little time longer, and add to the numbers that must fall into the enemy’s hands, for the garrison in time will be obliged to surrender, unless a sufficient number of men could be landed to dislodge the French or raise the siege. . . .’²

The throwing men into the citadel could ‘only enable it to hold out but a little time longer.’ If only the citadel had been enabled to hold out

¹ Hist. MSS. Comm. *Report on the Manuscripts of Lady du Cane, Introduction*, pp. xviii, xix. See also p. xxviii, and compare the importance Byng attached to the meeting with Caylus with that attached to it by Martin, as shewn by the entries in the journals.

² *Trial of the Hon. Admiral John Byng at a Court Martial*. Published by Order of the L.C.A. at the desire of the Court Martial (1757), pp. 5-6.

a little time longer even the failure to defeat La Galissonnière on May 20th might have been retrieved. Brodrick arrived at Gibraltar on June 15th with 5 Ships of the line and 3 Regiments in Transports. Byng arrived from Mahon on the 19th: the citadel surrendered on the 27th not through starvation nor to direct assault but on account of a surprise attack on one of the outworks, rendered successful by the sheer exhaustion of the small garrison. If Byng could have returned at once to Mahon with this reinforcement the citadel might well have been saved: the troops Byng was ordered to carry from Gibraltar would have strengthened the garrison by 30 per cent., and a delay of only twenty days would have brought Hawke off Minorca when the fate of both Galissonnière and Richelieu would have been sealed. Even a reinforcement of 100 men from the fleet would have been invaluable.

Richelieu had in fact found the situation very different from that which he had expected. Although Blakeney's requests for an increase of his garrison and for repairs to the defences had been persistently ignored by the Government for several years,¹ the fortifications were far stronger than the French had believed. The only plan Richelieu had of Fort St. Philip was an old Spanish one, and wholly inaccurate: if it had been known how greatly the English had strengthened the defences since the place had been in their hands, the attempt, it is said, would

¹ *Dict. Nat. Biography*, s. n. Blakeney.

never have been made.¹ On the 14th, 22nd, and 24th May, Richelieu was writing urgently for more artillery, without which he could make no progress in the siege; and the last of the guns did not arrive till the 24th June. A letter from Genoa expressed the apprehensions that were felt by the French lest the relieving squadron should arrive before Mahon surrendered.

‘The ablest engineers in France agree that if the English squadron arrives before the Marshal’s succours, and beats or drives the Marshal’s succours from the island, and provided the English Admiral can reinforce the garrison with 1500 men, it is very probable the Marshal may ruin his army without carrying the place if it is defended as it ought to be.’

The attitude of helplessness expressed in Byng’s despatch was reflected in the opinion of the Military Council of War at Gibraltar which considered the question of despatching a portion of the garrison of Gibraltar to reinforce St. Philip’s Castle. Sitting at a distance of six hundred miles from the scene of action, with very meagre information as to the actual state of affairs at Mahon, this Council decided not to obey the orders to reinforce the besieged garrison. The decision and the reasons therefor shew a supreme lack of appreciation of the possibilities of the situation. It was considered that the sending a detachment

¹ ‘On n’aurait jamais entrepris le siège de cette forteresse si l’on eût connu jusqu’à quel point les Anglais l’avaient rendue redoutable’ (Pajol, *Les Guerres sous Louis XV.*, vol. vi., p. 4).

equal to a battalion would, besides weakening the garrison at Gibraltar, 'be no way effectual to the relief of Minorca' for the reason that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to throw them in ; and if they could be thrown in, they would be ineffectual, as they would not be sufficient to dislodge the French or raise the siege, and therefore 'though such a detachment from this Garrison might have been of great service in Minorca, could they have been landed before the island was actually attacked and whilst a squadron of his Majesty's fleet had been there to co-operate with the troops in the defence and preservation of the island, yet in the present situation of affairs it is the opinion of the Council that the sending such a detachment from hence to Minorca at this time, instead of being useful to his Majesty's service, would be diminishing the strength of the garrisons of Gibraltar, and unnecessarily risking the loss of an additional number of his Majesty's troops, without any reasonable prospect or hope of their being of any assistance to Minorca.

2nd. Because the Toulon squadron, by the best accounts the Council have received, is at least equal in force if not superior to that under the command of Admiral Byng ; and should the British fleet be in any way weakened by an engagement or any other accident, the garrison of Gibraltar would be exposed to eminent danger, and as the garrison stands at present it is not more than sufficient for the common duty of the Garrison.'

A more extraordinary set of opinions it is difficult to conceive : apart from the fact that the security of the troops in transport and the

relative strength of the squadrons did not concern the Military Council in any way, being purely a naval question, we see these officers with no more information than that the garrison had retired to St. Philip's Castle, and that the enemy might command the landing places, resolve that it would be 'difficult if not impossible' to throw in reinforcements; and supporting that reason for not sending them by the peculiarly weak line of argument that even if they could be thrown in they would be ineffectual. Both these presumptions were wrong, as the evidence of the officer in command at Minorca, General Blakeney, shewed. This gallant veteran, when asked at the trial of Byng whether the troops could have been landed in safety, replied 'I have served sixty-three years and I never knew yet any enterprise undertaken without some danger, and this might have been effected with as little danger as ever I knew.' The landing places and approaches were not commanded by the enemy's fire (as the Council of War at Gibraltar decided they would be), and the General was perfectly confident that boats could have passed with security. Even the small assistance which Byng stated he could spare would have been invaluable; while, if the whole detachment ordered to be sent from Gibraltar had been landed, 'By the oath I have taken,' said Blakeney, 'I believe I could have held out till Sir Edward Hawke arrived.'¹

As to the further opinion of the Council that

¹ *Trial of Admiral Byng*, p. 28a.

if the battalion had been landed before the French attacked they would have been of 'great service,' it is not easy to reconcile it with the statement that they would be of no service if they were landed after the attack had been begun: in either case the number would have been too small to prevent the disembarkation of the enemy, and the situation must have developed into the same as that which existed—namely, a defence of the citadel. The Council could see no further than the defences of Gibraltar, and failed to appreciate that if there were really any danger to that fortress in the then situation of the enemy's expedition, the best defence for Gibraltar lay in ensuring the security of Minorca. A contemporary naval writer, in discussing the questions put by Byng to the Naval Council of War on the 24th April, suggests others which in his opinion would have been more proper, of which the following relates to the supposition that Gibraltar might be in danger.

'Whether it could be supposed, he asks, that the French would leave Minorca to attack Gibraltar before they had taken the Castle of St. Philip's; and when they had taken that, whether more men, ships of war and transports would not be absolutely necessary before they could make that attempt; and in the meantime whether a supply from England to Gibraltar might not reasonably be depended upon?'¹

If such a question had been put to both Councils

¹ *Three letters relating to the Navy, Gibraltar and Port Mahon.* (London, 1757), p. xix.

it is difficult to see how either could have acted as it did.

In spite of the decision of the Military Council it appears that General Fowke, who commanded at Gibraltar, made an unofficial offer to send troops if Byng so desired : and Byng was ready to take them if Fowke would send them 'as he (the General) was the best judge of whether they could be spared from his garrison or be of any service in the Castle of St. Philip.' But what with each trying to throw the responsibility on the other, nothing was done. General Fowke must certainly share the blame for the loss of Minorca.

Byng's attitude at Minorca was not unlike his attitude when he commanded on the coast of Provence in 1747. In that year the Austrians, whose cause the British squadron in the Mediterranean was assisting, invaded France and were threatening Toulon when a rising in Genoa forced them to withdraw. In the course of the advance the islands of St. Marguerite and St. Honorat had been taken by a joint British and Austrian force, and an Austrian garrison was left behind to hold the islands when the retreat was made. The Austrian Commander, General Brown, was especially desirous to retain the islands, with the objects of preventing the French from establishing magazines at Antibes, of hampering any French advance into Italy, and of assisting another Austrian advance, then in contemplation. Admiral Medley, who commanded the Mediterranean squadron, strongly insisted on the importance of holding the islands, and

sent Byng, who came out as second in command in February 1747, with orders to assist to hold them. But from the moment of his arrival he adopted a despondent attitude; when it was calm, he complained that he could not get close in shore and hinder the passage of troops in small craft: when it blew, he could not keep in his station. Eventually, the French crossed and re-took the islands, and a general advance along the Riviera followed immediately: so long as the Austrians held this post on the French flank this advance had been checked.

The difference between the manner in which Byng looked on the situation at Mahon and that in which his father had looked on a somewhat similar position in Sicily in 1718 is also worth notice. In the same way as the French had seized Minorca and invested the citadel, the Spaniards in the earlier case had seized Sicily and invested Messina: in each case the British squadron arrived too late to prevent the enemy from landing. But Sir George Byng's attitude towards the situation was by no means one of despair. Writing from Port Mahon on his way out, with the knowledge that the Spanish expedition had sailed and must have landed before he could arrive, he wrote:

‘ Since we cannot come time enough to prevent their landing and they will not withdraw their troops, I intend to attack their fleet and render them useless from either covering their army or bringing more succours to them, which I take to

be the design of sending this fleet under my command into these seas.' ¹

In this sentence lies the germ of the whole question. Sir George can hardly have expected so completely to annihilate the Spanish squadron as he did at Cape Passaro: in none of his despatches did he shew any lack of respect for the Spaniards. He was going to attack them, however, and establish himself on their line of communications. Nor did he take a passive attitude during the siege of Messina, although its fall appeared inevitable: he proposed to the General that he should throw in such reinforcements as were available to enable the garrison to make a strong sortie and destroy the enemy's works, his squadron supplying 500 men to hold the citadel meantime, whilst the ships themselves would make demonstrations or feints to the north and south of the town.

The attitude of the younger Byng at Minorca was utterly different, and indeed his acceptance of the idea that Gibraltar might be endangered shews that he had resigned himself to the loss of Minorca before ever his anchor was off the bottom of Gibraltar Bay. From May 24th, when the decision was made to take the squadron back to Gibraltar, until June 27th, the sea was open to the French, and supplies of artillery, troops, and food, all of them absolutely essential to the French army in Minorca, were being conveyed from Marseilles and Toulon in security. On June 7th a reporter wrote, 'There are above 40 transports

¹ Byng to Craggs, July 18, 1718.

at Marseilles, 30 of which are already out of the harbour, the best part loaded with oxen and the others are actually taking in bombs, balls, powder and provisions. There are at Toulon about 50 of these vessels loading provisions.' On the 11th an advice said, 'They continue sending provisions daily;' and on the 24th, 'Yesterday sailed about 20 vessels mostly loaded with oxen and sheep and one with bombs and 2 cannons.' Even if it proved impossible to throw reinforcements into St. Philip's, the interruption of these supplies would so seriously have affected the progress of the besiegers that the citadel might have been able to hold out.

In his defence, Byng affirmed that the French squadron was superior both in the size of the ships, the weight of metal and the number of men; and argued that he had been sent out with an inadequate force of ships consisting, moreover, of 'the worst conditioned and mostly of the worst manned of any perhaps in his Majesty's service.'

'I would ask [he says in his defence] with what view or intention I was sent out on this expedition?—if it be answered to protect or relieve Minorca, which is the seeming language of my instructions—I would again ask, Did those who sent me apprehend that Minorca could be invaded before my arrival, and the descent covered by a superior squadron, when they sent me out with so inadequate a force?—If they did, their conduct is unjustifiable; if they did not, their ignorance is inexcusable.'¹

¹ *Trial*, 102a.

Byng's complaint that his squadron was too weak does not appear to be justified: there is a marked discrepancy between the figures he put forward as to the number of guns and men in the French squadron and those cited by the Admiralty, but so far as actual complements were concerned the British ships appear to have been complete. The Administration in their defence claimed that the squadron which sailed from England was by itself at least equal to the Toulon squadron, and that when it was joined by Edgcumbe's ships it was superior. The former of these claims is palpably untenable; the latter, even on the information in the possession of the Administration is, at least, disputable. Byng's squadron carried 7037 men and 950 guns. Information received after the 8th April put Galissonnière's complements at 7040 and his guns at 908; the actual number of men and guns appear to have been 7650 and 934 respectively.¹ But both these figures are to some extent misleading, as they include the small frigates, without which Byng had 826 guns and Galissonnière 836.

So far as men were concerned, although Byng's complements were complete when he sailed, the delay in his getting away from England was principally due to lack of men: but it is singular that at a moment when the Admiralty were sending expresses to Byng to get to sea, he was being delayed at St. Helen's for this cause, when no fewer than 12 or 13 ships were lying at

¹ G. Lacour-Gayet, *La Marine Militaire de la France sous Louis XV.*, p. 506.

Spithead fully manned, from which his complements could have been completed, if the occasion were looked upon as pressing.

The other charge, that his squadron was sent too late and might have been despatched earlier, was a more weighty one, and in this matter there can be little doubt that Newcastle escaped impeachment only through the immense parliamentary majority of place-holders he had at his disposal. The defence does not adequately shew that the squadron could not have been sent sooner. Besides the ships in commission which were not ready for sea owing to being under repair or in want of men, many ships in home waters were employed on convoy duty or cruising for the protection of trade which could have been detached. Toulon could have been watched, and the expedition would then never have left its moorings. To this extent there can be no doubt that whatever may have been Byng's shortcomings, however he may have failed to appreciate the immeasurably weak position in which he had caught the enemy with an army locked up in the island and his fleet on its lines of communication, the primary reason for the loss of Minorca lay in the inaction of the Administration in not sending relief sooner or in greater strength.

The Committee of the whole House of Commons sat to consider the papers and accounts relating to intelligence concerning the motions or designs of the French; to preparations made and orders given for the equipment and sailing of ships, and for the defence of the British possessions in the

Mediterranean : also to the state and condition of the Navy and of Minorca during the years 1755 and 1756. The Committee reported on May 3rd, 1757, in the form of fifteen Resolutions.

The first Resolution agreed to was—That between the 27th August, 1755, and the 20th April, 1756, such repeated and concurrent information was received as to give a just reason for apprehending that the French intended to invade the United Kingdom. An amendment to this was proposed to the effect that the plan was laid aside as being too dangerous : but Newcastle's majority was sufficient to defeat the amendment by 147 votes to 91. Such an amendment would naturally, if passed, have led directly to the charge that no danger in home waters existed between those dates, and to the consequent inference that ships could and ought to have been detached earlier for the covering of Minorca—a conclusion which would have been fatal to the Administration.

The general terms of the succeeding thirteen resolutions ran on the following lines : It appeared clear to the Committee from advices received between August 1755 and April 1756, that troops were moved from the interior of France to the sea ports on the Channel and Atlantic coasts, where stores, artillery, provisions, and transports were preparing : that at the same time repeated information reached the Ministry that a squadron of 12 of the line was fitting out at Toulon, which would be ready in the spring of 1756 ; and that on the 4th of February definite information was received from our Consul at Genoa, Mr. Birtles,

confirmed later from other sources, that this force was intended to attack Minorca ; but that the squadron was badly manned and gunned. At the same time, the Committee agreed, intelligence was received between January and March 1756 that a squadron of 17 ships of the line was fitting out at Brest and Rochefort, which, later information of the 31st March stated, had been increased to 23, some of which were to be fitted as transports : that a squadron of 14 of the line under Hawke received orders to sail on the 12th March, and cruised to the Westward, reinforced on the 1st April with a further 5 ships under Rear-Admiral Holburne ; that orders for fitting out 10 ships for the Mediterranean were given on the 8th March ; that Byng was ordered to take command on the 11th, and that the squadron sailed on the 6th April : and as to the charges that the ships were badly or insufficiently manned, the Committee found that they were fully manned and included the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers as part complement, which was to be landed at Minorca in case the Commander-in-Chief at Mahon should require them for the defence.

It is here worth noting that these Fusiliers were part complement. Byng drew attention to this in his defence :

‘ Again, I am ordered when arrived at Minorca to assist the garrison with Lord Robert Bertie’s Regiment and as many gunners and men as I could spare out of the fleet. Does not this suppose the sea to be open and the fleet unopposed, or the order would be absurd ? for how could

it be expected I should disarm the squadron by sending part of its proper complement (which please to observe the Fusiliers were) on shore, when the whole was too little to secure success at sea? ' ¹

No reference to this anomaly in Byng's instructions appears to have been made. If the island were in danger, its security was to be obtained by success at sea, and to talk of denuding its first line of defence, the fleet, in order to strengthen a garrison which could only be wanted if that fleet should be driven off was clearly a mistake.

The Committee found that there were 27 ships of the line cruising in home waters on 1st April 1756: the duties and stations of these ships are interesting, and bear strongly on the question as to whether or not Byng's force, which sailed on the 6th of that month, after four weeks' delay for ships and men, could or could not have been stronger than it was, consistently with the security of the United Kingdom from invasion. Of these 27 ships of the line, 14 were under Hawke, cruising as a Westward squadron, and 5 were under Holburne, with orders to join him; the remainder were employed on detached service for the protection or attack of trade as follows: One between Cape Clear and Scilly, one between Scilly and Ushant, two off the Isle of Batz, one off Cape Barfleur, two in the Downs under Admiral Smith, and one at Cork; and besides these there were 28 more in commission in home ports

¹ *Trial*, 102a.

(exclusive of the ten under Byng), of which 17 were actually fitted for sea ; and besides these ships of the line, there were 45 frigates and sloops actually cruising, and 17 more fitting out or fitted for sea.

Four resolutions of the Committee dealt with the state of the garrison at Minorca, which was shewn to have consisted of 2860 officers and men : but no fewer than 35 officers, including the Governor of the island, the Governor of Fort St. Philip, and the Colonels of the four regiments in garrison, were absent on leave ; and it was not until February 1756 that the officers were ordered to return to their duty. When it is considered that England, for all practical purposes, had been at war since the early months of 1755, when Boscawen was sent to intercept the French reinforcements to Canada ; and that, during the time since then, repeated intelligences had been received that an armament was fitting out at Toulon, it reflects but little credit on the War Office that these officers should have been absent from their posts on leave.

The last resolution of the Committee which, in a manner, summed up the causes of the loss of the fortress is, however, the most interesting. It was not agreed to unanimously : the fate of the Administration hung on it even more than on the first. The words were as follows :—

‘ Resolved—That it appears to this Committee that the squadron of his Majesty’s ships in the Mediterranean in the month of December 1755

consisted of one ship of 60 guns, two of 50, four frigates and one sloop : and that the garrison of Fort St. Philip in the said month of December according to the last returns, made the 31st July 1755, consisted of 2860 men, officers included ; and that it doth appear that no greater number of ships of war could be sent into the Mediterranean than were sent on the 6th April 1756, nor any greater reinforcement than the regiment which was sent, and the detachment equal to a battalion which was ordered to the relief of Fort of St. Philip's, consistently with the State of the Navy, and the various services essential to the safety of his Majesty's dominions, and the interest of his subjects.'

The amendment proposed to this resolution ran thus ; to leave out the words after ' included ' and insert instead the following words :—

' The not sending an earlier and stronger naval force into the Mediterranean than that which sailed under Admiral Byng, notwithstanding the repeated advices received by his Majesty's Ministers of the beginning and progress of the fleet equipping at Toulon in the year 1755, and of the further progress, as well as the destination thereof, by a letter received the 4th February 1756, was a principal cause of the loss of Minorca ; and that the not giving any orders for the raising of miners for the defence of Fort St. Philip (the strength of which so much depended on its mines) until the 30th March 1756 ; and the delaying to send any reinforcements of troops whatever to the Island of Minorca, until the sailing of Admiral Byng on the 6th April 1756, are

also other principal causes of the loss of that island.'

The House divided on the question being put whether the words proposed to be left out should stand. Party interests prevailed, and the Resolution as it stood was agreed to without amendment by 195 to 115 votes.

In endeavouring to form an opinion on the action of the Administration, the main questions which present themselves for consideration are how soon should, and how soon could, a force have been sent to the Mediterranean to observe the motions of the Toulon squadron, whether that squadron were intended to attack the Mediterranean bases, to cover the passage of troops to America, or to act in conjunction with the squadrons in the Atlantic ports for a serious attempt on the coasts of the United Kingdom. According to the views of the Administration, as recited in the document hereafter, it was unnecessary to send a force any earlier, and both unnecessary and impossible to send a stronger force than that under Byng's command.

It will be well briefly to review the disposition of the ships of the British and French navies from the beginning of 1755. Reinforcements for the French troops in Canada sailed from Brest on the 3rd May, carried in 10 ships of the line armed *en flûte* with 20 to 22 guns and 5 transports: the ships of the line forming the escorting squadron consisted of 3 under De la Motte, and an additional 6 under Macnémara were added to see the convoy

safe into the sea ; these latter returned to Brest on the 20th May. Boscawen with 11 of the line ¹ had left Plymouth on the 27th April, and on receipt of intelligence that the French squadron comprised 19 of the line ² another six of the line under Holburne were sent to reinforce Boscawen. Thus 17 sail of British ships of the line and 13 sail of French were detached in the direction of the St. Lawrence, and so far as information went, there were the following ships in the French Atlantic ports in various stages of completion in June 1755 :—

Macnémara's squadron	.	.	6
In Brest	.	.	21
At Rochefort	.	.	4
			<hr/>
			31
			<hr/>

Macnémara's ships put to sea again in June under Du Guay, and eventually went to Cadiz ; of the remainder, only 15 were in any degree of readiness by July 1st ; and reports from the Mediterranean of about the same date indicated that 5 ships of the line were ready at Toulon, but that orders were out for fitting 6 more.

At this time, after Boscawen and Holburne had sailed with their 17 ships, there were no fewer than 34 of the line in different stages of completion in the British home ports : it was clear that the

¹ The eleven includes one 50-gun ship.

² It was uncertain how many of the ships that sailed with De la Motte and Macnémara were fully armed.

French were concentrating their energies on securing their position in Canada, and there was no fear of an invasion of Great Britain at that time ; neither troops nor transports were assembled, nor was the available naval force in the French home ports sufficient to cover an embarkation. Thus up to July, while there was no danger at home which could prevent the sending of ships to the Mediterranean, there was also no necessity, in view of the state of the ships at Toulon, to do so : four frigates were all that were reported to be ready.

During July intelligences from Toulon shewed that affairs in that port were still proceeding in a leisurely manner ; but in August some acceleration was reported, and a rumour was about that an attack on Gibraltar was in contemplation. A great shew of business was also made at the northern ports,¹ and troops were said to be marching from the inland ports towards Dunkirk, whence, so said one of our intelligences, an embarkation was intended. But in the meantime Hawke was at sea with 16 of the line, cruising to the Westward to intercept Du Guay on his return and to prevent a junction of the French ships in Toulon and those in the Atlantic ports : these latter were scattered, ten being at Brest and five at Rochefort ; six under Du Guay were expected back from Cadiz, and another ten under De la Motte were expected back from Canada, for which Boscawen's squadron was

¹ Advices. No. 11, B.2., 8th-11th August.

watching the mouth of the St. Lawrence. The situation at this time, as far as any danger to the Kingdom was concerned, called for no anxiety: but Du Guay slipped back into Brest in August, and De la Motte evaded Boscawen and also got home untouched, so that a numerous naval force of which, however, but few of the ships were actually fit for the sea, was collected in Brest.¹ This is the time (October 1755) which the writer of the Memorandum describes as fraught with such danger to Great Britain that no ships could possibly be spared for the Mediterranean, in spite of reports which clearly shewed that a squadron of at least 12 ships of the line was fitting out with all expedition at Toulon² and that troops were being moved in that direction, while no naval force capable of covering an invasion was in any way ready in the northern ports.

The monthly lists of the Admiralty, which were produced for the Committee, shewed the disposition of the ships of the line in commission in these last months of 1755.

¹ See Admiralty Advices of 21st October.

² See *Earl of Holderness*, p. 27. No. 15, Recd. 12th September; p. 32. No. 17, Recd. 22nd September; p. 40. No. 25, Recd. 10th October; p. 43. No. 26, Recd. 14th October; pp. 45, 46. No. 28 and 29, Recd. 31st October.

Admiralty, p. 30. No. 8, Recd. 19th September; p. 32. No. 7, Recd. 22nd September; p. 36. No. 12, Recd. 30th September; p. 40. No. 14, Recd. 11th October; p. 42. No. 15, Recd. 14th October.

Pitt, p. 34. No. 129, Recd. 30th September; p. 36. No. 83, Recd. 4th October; p. 38. No. 170, Recd. 8th October; p. 44. No. 186, Recd. 18th October.

Station.	October.	November.	December.
Plantations . . .	9	9	11
Boscawen . . .	15	15	*
Mediterranean . . .	1	1	3
East Indies . . .	4	4	4
Cruising in home waters	24	31	14
In home ports . . .	24	22	51
	77	82	83

* Boscawen returned in November.

The Administration stated that no ships could be sent before the end of December 1755. The above table shews ships of the line cruising in home waters to the number of 24 in October and 31 in November. The October number is made up of a squadron under Byng of 12 of the line which sailed on the 14th of that month to the Westward, the other 12 being either in the Downs or cruising singly for the protection of trade. Byng's squadron was subsequently reinforced by 5 more of the line,¹ bringing his force up to 17 ships. The arguments put forward for the constant presence of a Western squadron and the large numbers required to maintain it at all times superior to the squadrons in the French Atlantic ports are incontestable; a note attached to one of the papers, in a different handwriting, runs as follows:—

‘14 for a Western squadron would call for 18 or 19 appropriated to that service: 10 for service

¹ Two on 15th October, the day after he sailed, and three more on 28th October under Admiral Holburne.

in the Downs and Channel and to be ready upon any alarm would require 12 or 13 : together, from 30 to 32.

‘ Besides these, 2 off Cape Clear, 2 off Cape Finisterre and 2 in the Fairway into the Channel would be necessary for covering the frigates and sloops and protecting the trade in their principal routes from depredations : and those six cruisers could not constantly be kept up with less than 8 sail.’

‘ Cruisers ’ in the foregoing note denotes ships of the line on cruising service, so that it may be said that the Admiralty required a force of about 40 sail of the line to provide for the security of the Kingdom and its trade in home waters. Which of the above main services could best be drawn upon to provide a force to protect Minorca ?

The Advices received at the end of October and the beginning of November do not shew that the French had any large force ready or likely to be ready in their Atlantic ports at that time : there was no question that all the ships in their ports could not be fitted out, nor that those which had returned from sea were unfit for immediate service. Byng’s 17 of the line was superior, even allowing for ships absent on relief, to any force the enemy could send to sea, and over and above his squadron there were 7 of the line cruising on trade protection and another 17 actually ready in the home ports. Out of these 24 ships, could none have been spared when the security of an important possession such as Minorca was in question ?

Byng and Boscawen both returned in November, and the tale of their cruising is told in the list for December, wherein no fewer than 51 ships are shewn in the home ports, of which only a few were reported as ready; the greater proportion were fitting, refitting, or on Harbour service, though undoubtedly, as on previous occasions, a good many could have got to sea on a pressing emergency. The 14 ships shewn as cruising were under Admiral Smith in the Downs or to the westward in trade protection, and there was at this time no force in the French home ports that indicated any preparation of such a squadron as would be required to cover an invasion. On the other hand, the intelligences from the Mediterranean as to the French preparations were very complete in December. The Toulon squadron was nearly ready; ¹ troops were moving towards the ports of Provence, in which numbers of polaccas, settees, and tartans were being collected for the Government service—craft which pointed to the destination of the troops being one which did not involve a long overseas voyage—and a tight hand was being kept on the seamen. The Ministry chose deliberately to shut its eyes to these preparations, most explicitly set forth, and to pay heed to the movements of troops in northern France, where there were, according to information, only 5 ships of the line and 4 frigates ready which could cover the embarkation. The danger from invasion at this time was

¹ See particularly, pp. 52, 55, *Edgcumbe*, 17th and 21st November.

chimerical; the possibility of an attempt on Minorca was very real: and ships of the line most certainly could have been sent at this time to the Mediterranean had the Ministry chosen to regulate their strategy according to the real requirements of the situation and to ignore the massing of troops whose transport undefended was impossible.

If we pass on and examine the lists for January, February, and March, we find the dispositions of ships to be as follows:—

Station.	January.	February.	March.
East Indies . . .	4	4	4
Plantations . . .	11	12	13
Mediterranean . . .	3	3	3
Cruising . . . }	11	22	20
Convoys . . . }			
Ready or refitting in home ports . }	54	44	47
	83	85	87

Here again, could not ships have been spared earlier than the beginning of March? Orders for fitting out Byng's squadron were dated March 8th. No news of any importance was received during January and February indicating an increase in the number of heavy ships ready to carry out any enterprise of importance from the northern French ports. Rumours of plans of invasion, it is true, continued to be received: troops were assembling at Boulogne, Dunkirk,

and Havre; ammunition and provisions were being collected; East India ships were being chartered for transports; but with all this there was no naval force to cover the expedition, in any state of readiness: yet the Administration professed to have been alarmed by these preparations, which without an escorting or covering force, or both, were comparatively harmless. These fears do not appear to have been the real cause of the omission to send ships to the Mediterranean; for if the Ministry had truly believed an invasion to be so imminent as to demand a large force in home waters, would they have detached a 60-gun ship to Jamaica in the early part of January? or a squadron of 12 of the line to convoy a merchant fleet to Lisbon?

The information from France as regards their ships did not indicate any intention to invade; such squadrons as were ready in the early months of the year were reported to be preparing for a voyage to America, and though 100,000 troops might be collecting in northern France there was no possibility that they could invade England without protection by sea: on the other hand every advice from the Mediterranean was explicit and pointed to an embarkation from Toulon. It is true that such open talk as to its destination might well point to a feint to draw our forces to the Mediterranean; the trick was an old one and had been played by the Spaniards in 1740: but what was not taken into sufficient account was the possibility of the feint, if it were one, being turned into a real attack, in which

case its very failure to operate as a feint would prove its success as an actual undertaking.

Thus throughout January and February a considerable force of ships of the line was kept in home waters for the protection of the Kingdom and the defence and attack of trade, and no attention was paid to the advices from the Mediterranean. What strikes one in this matter is the large number of ships of the line employed cruising on purely trade protection or attack, when an important strategic position was reported, from most trustworthy sources, to be threatened.

On the 25th February the secret information as to the French war plan was received. Hawke was hurried to sea on the 27th with a squadron of 12 of the line. In the interval, two small French squadrons consisting altogether of 9 ships had sailed to the West Indies from the Atlantic ports. Osborn's squadron had not fulfilled that purpose of a Western squadron, as expressed in the Memorandum, of preventing succours from being sent abroad: it had been employed on purely convoy work, and Brest had been left open. The Admiralty prided itself on the care with which it had provided squadrons to protect our coast by keeping the enemy's ships shut up in Brest: but there was no squadron to prevent the sailing of these 9 ships which, for all the measures taken, might as well have executed a diversionary raid on the British coasts as have carried troops to Canada.

As has been seen, Byng's squadron was ordered to be fitted out on the 8th March in consequence

of the information received on the 25th February. The Administration stated that no other ships could be sent, and that the squadron could sail no earlier than it did, namely, on the 6th of April. Yet on that same 8th March a ship of the line was sent to sea to cruise off Cape Barfleur; on the 11th of March two ships of the line were sent to the Leeward Islands and two to North America; on the 18th of March two more were ordered to cruise between Scilly, Ushant, and the Isle of Batz, and two more on the 23rd to cruise off Cherbourg, all of those on the French coast being concerned with an attempt to intercept a French coasting convoy of 40 merchant vessels: and while Byng was lying waiting at St. Helen's, delayed only for want of men, he was directed not to touch men from the Nassau, Torbay, Essex, or Prince Frederick, all fully manned ships of the line, as the vessels were wanted on the most pressing service—the pressing service which transcended the security of Minorca, being the attempt to intercept the convoy referred to above!

Here, at any rate, there were ships that might have been taken to form part of a squadron which could have sailed earlier for the Mediterranean, and men to man other ships withal. The news that a squadron was preparing at Portsmouth for the Straits caused the utmost anxiety at Toulon, and every effort was made to get the Minorca expedition to sea; yet it did not get away from Toulon till April 12th—six days after Byng left Portsmouth and five weeks after the orders for fitting out his ships had been given. Not only

could ships have been sent earlier without the least danger to the United Kingdom, but a stronger force could have been sent ; those ships which were employed as described could have been added to Byng's squadron, whereby instead of a bare equality with Galissonnière he would have had a crushing superiority. It is indeed possible there were not more ships in harbour fit for service : the number of men on board them shews how serious was the lack of men : but the criticism lies in the manner in which the ships fit for service and actually cruising were employed.

Byng was made the scapegoat to cover the sins of omission of the Administration, whose blunders he had failed to retrieve. Ruskin says that one of the worst diseases to which the human creature is liable is its disease of thinking, and that if 'it would only just *look* at a thing instead of thinking what it must be like, or *do* a thing, instead of thinking it cannot be done, we should all get on far better.' Byng 'thought' what the situation at Minorca must be like before he looked at it, and 'thought' the garrison could not be reinforced, without trying whether it were possible to throw in troops : but for all that it was not he alone who was responsible for the loss of the island ; others must share the blame. The War Office, who allowed the absence of the officers on leave ; the members of the Council of War at Gibraltar, who decided not to try to assist with reinforcements ; the members of the Council of War in the fleet, who agreed unanimously to Byng's leading questions ; and

finally the Administration at home, which failed to repair the defences, strengthen the garrison, and take the necessary steps for its protection from the beginning—all these must share the blame.

The following paper, however, besides dealing with the particular case of Minorca, is of interest on broader grounds: it enunciates some points of fact and strategy which are as true to-day as they were when they were written, among which are the differences between paper lists of a fleet and the actual number of ships ready for service at any time; the large number of ships necessary to a power whose strategy must be based on the principle of blockade, in order to maintain a force at sea which shall at all times be ready to engage an enemy issuing in full strength from his own harbours; the paralysing effect of lack of men; the confusion resulting from inadequate information, and the disaster which follows a misapplication of that intelligence. The principles on which the Western squadron was based are not less clearly shewn¹—that squadron which so materially influenced our position in India in the previous war and was to form the pivot of our strategy in our later struggles.²

¹ Vernon wrote in 1745: 'And look back to the latter end of the Reign of Queen Ann, when we had well-conducted Western Squadrons under the direction of experienced Admirals, with a proper latitude in their orders, and it will be found the Trade was well protected by them, the enemy's privateers suppressed, and some detached to proper stations that distressed the enemy's trade at the same time; and were in the best stations with the Main Body, or protecting all these Kingdoms from invasions' (*Seasonable Advice from an Honest Sailor*, London, 1746).

² See *The Barham Papers*, vol. ii., pp. 392 *et seq.* (N.R.S., vol. xxxviii).

In reading the arguments put forward it must be borne in mind that the Administration is on its defence, and is making out the best case it can for its omission to secure Minorca. It is not, therefore, in any sense a dispassionate or judicial examination into the measures taken; and exaggerations, mis-statements, and misapplications of precedents find their places in it: but for all that the pamphlet throws a considerable light on the way in which the Administration looked on the problem, and may be of some assistance in endeavouring to arrive at the causes governing the loss of Minorca.

The instructions to Hawke are included in order to shew what measures the Administration took after Byng's return to Gibraltar was known to them, and also a plan of the action between Byng and Galissonnière, the original of which is bound up with the Admiralty copy of the MSS. There is nothing to shew by whom the plan was made; but the wording of the references¹ and the note at the end as to the respective forces, would appear to indicate that it represented Byng's own view of the action; the detailed manner in which the ships are shewn gives the impression that it was prepared by a person who was present.

My thanks are due to Sir John Laughton for his great assistance and invaluable advice; and to Mr. Perrin who first brought the volume to my notice and subsequently searched for missing papers with which to complete the publication.

¹ Particularly in No. 2, CC 'Time of engaging, etc.'

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PAPERS RELATING TO THE LOSS OF MINORCA IN 1756

[The manuscript volume, after giving the Report of the Trial, the orders to Byng, some accounts of the action, of which two are in French, and some other papers relative to the matter, continues by giving an outline of the events in chronological order from the 11th March as follows:]

11th March, 1756.—Vice-Admiral Byng received an order from the Lords of the Admiralty to repair to Portsmouth and take under his command ten ships of the line and to get them ready for the sea with all possible despatch: a copy of this order you have marked A.

Orders had been before given in the most pressing manner to get these and all our other ships in readiness, and every method was put in practice for procuring seamen to man them.

These ships in conjunction with those which were in the Mediterranean, under Commodore Edgcumbe, were intended to oppose the attempts of the Toulon fleet. Whether destined for America against Minorca or any other place, which was

then uncertain, Mr. Byng knew before he went to Portsmouth that the Toulon fleet, according to the general run of intelligence, was to consist of 12 ships of the line and 5 frigates.

Mr. Secretary Fox, 20th March, 1756, which was after Mr. Byng was at Portsmouth, received intelligence from the Earl of Bristol dated Turin, 6th March 1756, that eleven ships were upon the point of sailing from Toulon harbour, vizt. five frigates and six ships of the line, and that two other large ships were fitting out with great expedition, and that the report of an invasion of Minorca was very strong.

A copy of this advice was the same day sent to Mr. Byng at Portsmouth by order of the Lords of the Admiralty, with pressing instructions to get his fleet ready to sail with the utmost despatch.¹

It has been pretended that the sending of this

¹ *The state of H.M. ships under the command of the Honble. Adl. Byng, March 22, 1756.*

Ship's Name.	Number of Men														
	Complement	Born	Muster'd	Checqued				Sick		Officers & Servants	Petty & Ab.	Ordinary	Landmen	Marines	Short of Complement
				Widows' Men	With Leave	Without Leave	Lent	On Board	Ashore						
Ramillies . .	770	734	442	8	34	2	199	10	49	66	364	98	94	111	36
Buckingham.	535	535	508	5	—	—	—	16	22	60	314	40	44	77	—
Culloden . .	600	600	583	6	—	—	—	16	3	52	370	85	—	93	—
Trident . .	500	496	345	5	9	1	116	8	20	45	120	200	131	—	4
Captain . .	480	431	376	5	—	2	11	16	37	48	213	47	46	77	49
Revenge . .	480	387	368	5	3	—	—	22	11	46	201	27	43	70	93
Lancaster . .	520	492	417	6	—	—	37	4	30	48	211	79	80	74	28
Kingston . .	400	389	370	4	—	—	4	8	11	42	130	76	76	65	11
Defiance . .	400	400	377	4	—	8	—	20	11	40	112	90	91	67	—

(Sgd.) J. BYNG.

The above shews the state of the Squadron at the time Byng was receiving orders to get ready to sail with the utmost despatch a fortnight after the instructions for fitting out had been given.

intelligence to Mr. Byng was a concealing the strength of the enemy from him ; but this is an after-thought since his arrival in England, not founded in truth, and is not complained of by him in the letters he wrote from Gibraltar of the 4th of May 1756 or any of his other letters where he had been informed of the real force of the French fleet, a list whereof came in that despatch, and is printed in the *Trial* with the letter and the rest of the papers that came enclosed.

30th March, 1756.—The Lords of the Admiralty sent Mr. Byng his general instructions, a copy of which is printed in Mr. Byng's *Trial*, page 4.

31st March, 1756.—The Lords of the Admiralty by an additional order directed Admiral Byng to land Lord Robert Bertie's Regiment at Minorca, in case the island should be attacked, and the Governor should think it necessary, and thereby directed him in case an additional reinforcement should be found necessary, to convoy a battalion from Gibraltar for that purpose—a copy of this order is printed in the *Trial*, page 5.

These instructions will appear to have been so clear and precise and to be so well warranted by the advices and intelligence the Administration had received of the various and uncertain destination of the Toulon fleet, that no reasonable objection can even now be made to them.

1st April, 1756.—Admiral Byng by a letter of this date acknowledges the receipt of the order of the 31st March and adds: ' I shall punctually observe their Lordships' directions with regard to the landing Lord Robert Bertie's Regiment at Minorca as well as the convoying the Battalion from Gibraltar to that island, if it should be thought necessary.

' With regard to the instructions I have

received I shall use every endeavour and means in my power to frustrate the designs of the enemy if they should make an attempt on Minorca, knowing the great importance that island is of to the Crown of Great Britain.

‘The Squadron under my command is in every respect ready for sailing, except the want of men ; they will take 336 effectives now the Regiments are all on board to complete them.’¹

2nd April, 1756.—Mr. Cleveland acquaints Mr. Byng that as his speedy departure was of the utmost consequence the Lords of the Admiralty enjoined him not to lose a moment’s time in proceeding with those ships that were ready, and, in case the Ludlow Castle should not be come to Spithead, to leave one of his ships behind to receive such men as were in her, and to take the like number out of that ship to man the Ramillies.

3rd April, 1756.—Mr. Byng informs Mr. Cleveland that a disposition was made of the supernumeraries so as to be able to put to sea the first opportunity ; for which purpose he was unmooring in order to fall down to St. Helens.

4th April, 1756.—From St. Helens, Admiral Byng writes to Mr. Cleveland that the ships of the Squadron with the assistance of the supernumeraries brought in the Ludlow Castle and other

¹ The Memorandum does not quote this portion of the letter in full. After the words ‘to complete them,’ Byng continues : ‘particularly my own ship which is in want of two hundred and twenty-two, one hundred and eighty-three of that number being lent to the Ludlow Castle, likewise the Trident has seventy-eight, lent to the Hampton Court and Tilbury, which ships we are not likely to meet with, therefore they must be discharged into those ships, which will make a great hole in the Trident’s complement. . . . Although their Lordships are very pressing for me to sail, I take upon me to stay (tho’ the wind is fair) the return of this express to know their Lordships’ final orders with regard to men for the squadron.’

ships are now completed,¹ and the fact was that the *Ramillies* and many other ships had, including their shares of Lord Robert Bertie's men, considerably more than their complements ; so that here it is in Mr. Byng's letters No. 32 and 36² the most explicit admission that his ships were complete as to men and in every other respect. His men were picked men, as appears by the numbers he discharged in order to take in others, of which there are particular accounts in the table, and it appears by the intelligence in No. 7 and No. 9 that ships could scarce possibly be worse manned than the French appear to have been.

As to the condition Mr. Byng's ships were in, in a state he sent to the Admiralty, dated the 31st March, 1756, No. 31, he certifies that eight of the ten ships under his command were then fit for the sea ; he is silent as to the *Intrepid*, she being out on a cruise and not joining him till the 3rd April. It is since insisted the *Intrepid* was not fit for service. Mr. Byng wrote four

¹ Byng's letter of the 4th April ran as follows :

Sir,—I am sorry to acquaint you the wind still continues blowing fresh from the westward which prevents my proceeding to sea.

I was greatly disappointed to find the *Intrepid* was so very short of her complement when she arrived here, altho' she brought 261 supernumeraries she wanted 153 of them to complete her own complement ; the remainder I have dispersed to the ships of the squadron, which, with the assistance of the supernumeraries brought in the *Cambridge*, are now completed.

Captain Young not having had orders to complete his provisions and stores for foreign service, may delay his proceeding to sea with me. I have given directions to get those articles on board with the utmost despatch, and have wrote to Commissioner Hughes to send off immediately the stores he is in want of ; I hope he will have everything on board to-day, if not, and the wind should come fair, I shall proceed with the squadron to sea, and leave directions for him to follow me with the utmost expedition.

² These are the letters of which extracts are quoted above.

letters to the Admiralty after the *Intrepid* joined him—Nos. 34, 35, 36, 37—and makes no mention of it.¹

6th April, 1756.—Mr. Byng sailed from St. Helens and arrived at Gibraltar the 2nd May, after a tedious passage of 27 days occasioned by contrary winds and calms.

Mr. Byng, in his letter of 4th May, 1756, to Mr. Cleveland from Gibraltar, enclosed a copy of the Council of War held there by General Fowke, and several other papers which are printed in the *Trial*, pages 5, 6 and pages 8 to 11.

6th May, 1756.—Mr. Fowke wrote a letter to Lord Barrington, a copy of which² is in the

¹ *Intrepid* had been cleaned quite recently—viz. on 22nd November 1755.—*Trial*, Appendix, p. 13.

² This letter is absent from the documents: a copy of it is in Brit. Mus. Add. MSS. 35895 ff. 110-1, and runs as follows:

'On Sunday the 2nd instant Admiral Byng and Rear-Admiral West arrived in this Bay with 10 ships of His Majesty's Ships having the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers on board. The same day I had the honour of receiving your Lordship's letters of the 21st and 28th March and 1st April: and, the accounts I had two days before received from Minorca giving me great reason to apprehend that the detachment required to be sent from this garrison to that island could not (from the alteration of circumstances between the time of your Lordship's writing your letters and that of my receiving them) contribute to the relief of Minorca, I assembled a council to consider of the situation of His Majesty's garrisons and forces in the Mediterranean and to consult what measures to take that might be most conducive to His Majesty's Service, and after mature deliberation we were unanimously of opinion that the sending a detachment equal to a battalion would evidently weaken this garrison and be no way effectual to the relief of Minorca. But Admiral Byng having represented that there was a deficiency of men aboard the ships late under the command of Commodore Edgcumbe on account of his having left a number of sailors and marines at Minorca to assist in the defence of the place, and that a detachment was absolutely necessary to render those ships useful, it was the opinion of the council of war that I should [send] such a detachment on board as should be judged necessary to enable those ships to act in a proper manner against the enemy.

'The enclosed copy of the proceedings of the Council will

intelligence No. 9, which is not to be reconciled either by the Council of War or Mr. Byng's letter of the 4th May, 1756.

8th May, 1756.—Mr. Byng sailed from Gibraltar and got off Minorca the 19th of May, and the 20th May his fleet, which after his junction with Mr. Edgcumbe, consisted of thirteen ships of the line and four frigates, engaged the Toulon fleet which consisted of twelve ships of the line and four frigates, and which on the 12th of April preceding had sailed from Toulon for Minorca and arrived at Minorca the 18th April.

20th May, 1756.—Commodore Brodrick sailed with a reinforcement of five large ships of the line and several transports, with three Regiments for Minorca, and he arrived at Gibraltar the 15th June, 1756.

16th June, 1756.—Sir Edward Hawke sailed for the Mediterranean in the *Antelope* and arrived at Gibraltar the 2nd July¹ which he left the [10th] July and arrived off Minorca the 18th July, being 20 days after the French were masters of Fort Saint Philip, it having capitulated the 28th June, 1756.

more fully explain the motive for this our opinion, and will, I hope, fully acquit me from any imputation of disobedience to His Majesty's commands.

' Though it was not judged proper to send from this garrison a detachment which could not be usefully employed, yet when I acquainted Admiral Byng with the opinion of the Council of War I at the same time told him that if he thought it necessary I would order a detachment equal to a battalion to be embarked to serve on board His Majesty's Fleet under his command; to which he answered that he did not think so large a detachment necessary and that he only required a sufficient number to put the ships late under Mr. Edgcumbe's command in a condition to act against an enemy, and I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship a list of the number of officers and men demanded by the Admiral, and of their distribution.

¹ The *Antelope* arrived at Gibraltar on 4th July and sailed for Minorca on 10th.

Mr. Byng has been tried for his share in the loss of Minorca, and the Court Martial by their sentence have found 'that he did not do his utmost to relieve Saint Philip's Castle or, on the 20th May, to destroy the French ships or assist the King's ships in the fight with the French.'

And in consequence of this loss the conduct of the Administration and particularly of the Admiralty Department is now become the object of a Parliamentary enquiry.

They are blamed for not sending a stronger fleet into the Mediterranean to the relief of Minorca, and for their not sending it sooner so as to have kept the French fleet in Toulon harbour and thereby prevented their attempt on Minorca; for, admitting Mr. Byng arrived there time enough to have relieved St. Philip's and that he had a fleet equal if not superior to the enemy, which, if properly conducted, would have driven off the French Squadron, it is yet insisted that Minorca ought to have been absolutely secured from invasion, which it might have been if our fleet had been there or at Toulon by the end of March or beginning of April: and that a still greater force of ships than Mr. Byng had, would have enabled him to have destroyed the French Squadron, and that therefore nothing can justify the not doing both, but the danger we were in at home and the want of naval strength at that time.

The enquiry, therefore, will in a great measure depend on the following questions:

1st. Whether, consistently with the probable safety of this country, a Squadron could have been sent to the Mediterranean sooner.

2nd. Whether, consistently with the probable safety of this country, that Squadron, when it was sent, could have been made stronger.

A great number of papers were on the 8th February, 1757, moved for and ordered *nemine contradicente* to be laid before the House of Commons which, among other particulars, state all the intelligence received by the Administration preceding the 6th April, 1756, of the designs of the French for an invasion of Great Britain or Ireland and for attacking Minorca or any other of the King's British possessions.

The condition of the English Navy during that period, the state of its repairs and number of men, and the variety of services in which those ships were employed, may be from thence deduced and stated.

The state of our Army during the same period, although not mentioned in the papers called for upon this occasion, ought nevertheless to be attended to, for, although this does not relate to the Admiralty Department, it is very material to the present question, for if our strength at land was insufficient, it was on that account the more necessary to keep a sufficient and respectable fleet at home.

It will appear that at this time great bodies of troops were assembling along the French coast, particularly in Picardy, Normandy, and Brittany. The Army in England was between two and three thousand short of its number, and deducting from that Army the Horse Guards and four battalions of Foot Guards, which could not stir from London, also between three and four thousand invalids employed in garrison and the new regiments which were then raising, which were incomplete and without the least training, there remained no more than about 13,000 Foot and 4,000 Dragoons to take the field on any emergency for the defence of this part of the Kingdom: the Hessians were

but just required, the Dutch were not expected, the Hanoverians were not moved for, and the earliest that any of the foreign troops could be here was in May.

The great naval preparations of the French in the beginning of the year 1755 making it necessary to arm by sea, on our side, the utmost efforts were exerted by us, and with such success that towards the end of April our fleet at home was greatly superior to that of the French, but our situation was embarrassing to the last degree.

To permit the French fleet to sail and to arrive in America with their troops was giving them a superiority there. To cruise for them off Brest was beginning the war in Europe and must have given great advantage to the French Ministers and Emissaries in every Court.

To send a fleet to America equal or superior to what the French might send thither left us exposed at home in case the French, as it was imagined by some, proposed to come with their whole strength to Great Britain or Ireland.

In this situation Mr. Boscawen was sent to America with eleven ships of the line: a fleet superior to the naval strength of France was kept at home, with a proper detachment ready to follow to America in case the French sailed thither. If the whole number of their ships should proceed they must either separate or keep together. If they separated for expedition Mr. Boscawen would pick them up in detail; if they kept together Mr. Holbourne would probably arrive before them with such a reinforcement to Mr. Boscawen's Squadron as would render it considerably superior; for it was known that part of the French fleet was employed as transports and carried only their upper tier.

We had the earliest intelligence of the sailing of the French fleet ; our reinforcement went within a very few days after them ; part of the French Squadron returned to Brest and Mr. Boscawen missed the greatest part of the remainder which proceeded to America, some of which got to Canada, some to Louisbourg, and all except three taken by us returned to France notwithstanding the utmost care of our Squadrons in America and Europe. The Louisbourg Squadron fairly out-sailed us, the Canada Squadron passed the Straits of Belleisle where no large ships had ever ventured before, and both got into port notwithstanding the vigilance of Sir Edward Hawke and Admiral West.

The same fortune carried in M. Du Guay, and the fairest opportunities of crushing the naval strength of France were lost without the least blame on the Administration, which can do no more than furnish superior forces under the best Commanders and sent to the most likely stations.

Another very unlucky circumstance was the delay of Mr. Boscawen's return six weeks longer than his fleet was expected to be at home, which disabled his fleet, ruined the health of his men, and made a long [lie up] necessary to recruit both. He was forced to leave six ships to winter at Halifax, where they could not refit or get men without the utmost difficulty, and where they remained till the month of May.

By these untoward accidents the French's whole strength got into their ports in the month of October ; our ships under Sir Edward Hawke, returned into port the latter end of September, and Mr. Boscawen arrived in November from very long cruises, and with their Squadrons in that miserable state both as to ships and men,

with which long cruises are always attended. Mr. Boscawen buried 2,000 men while he was out.

There never was a more dangerous crisis for this country than during the autumn of 1755. The French Squadrons were returned into port and many English ships of the line were abroad, while all the enemy's were at home. Vast bodies of French troops lay on their side of the Channel, our Army was very inconsiderable, though no legal method to increase it had been omitted.

After the return of our fleets the far greater part of our ships of the line were in docks ; and 4,000 of our seamen in the hospital, besides great number of sick for whom no room could be made and who (to the great detriment of their health and retardment of their cure) were on board of ships, [while] many more who were less ill, and who could be trusted, were allowed on shore at large for their recovery. The French fleets had suffered very little ; they had either been in port or had a common passage to and from America ; Mons^r. Du Guay had cruised a little with very few ships and had returned without loss or sickness. Our safety at this juncture was solely due to the measure which had been taken in the summer to stop all French ships and bring them into our ports. The three hundred ships and eight thousand seamen taken before Christmas, had they arrived in France, might have brought over more troops than were in this island to oppose them, convoyed by more ships than we could send to sea at that time.¹ The greater the effort which

¹ The French ships that came home were not ready as stated above, but were disarmed and refitted and were not available for any such service ; and this was known by letters received in November. On the other hand, we had one 2nd rate, sixteen 3rd rates, and fourteen 4th rates actually cruising or in the Downs under Admiral Smith.

is made for some important object in order to give it the better certainty of success the greater will your inability be to make another such effort for any purpose whatever.

Our object was the intercepting the French fleets ; to this end we sent out every ship we had ; we kept them out till the last moment, and Mr. Boscawen's Squadron was kept out longer even than was intended. If the object had been obtained, the bad condition of our Navy had been of little consideration : as we failed it was of the utmost.

This was the deplorable state of our affairs in October and November 1755 : nothing was omitted which could tend to repair the ships or recover the men. The utmost expedition possible was used to get our shattered Squadrons out again to sea—consistent with the attention necessary for bringing forward the new ships intended to replace such as became useless by extreme wear and tear, with the usual accidents at sea and war—to augment the Navy.

These objects, however important in their nature and difficult in their execution, did not so entirely engross the attention of the Admiralty as to prevent their sending out 24 ships of the line¹ to cruise in the Channel and Bay of Biscay, which, having met with a degree of bad weather uncommon even at that season of the year, came in about the beginning of December in a condition which augmented our difficulty, our labours, and our distress.

The following accounts taken from the books of the Admiralty will show the state of the fleet

¹ The squadron sent out under Byng and West consisted of 17, not 24, ships of the line.

in the end of December or beginning of January 1756.

One hundred and sixty-eight ships and vessels were in commission, of which 84 were of the line.

Complement	.	.	.	.	49,596
Borne	.	.	.	.	42,868
Mustered	.	.	.	.	35,958

Forty-four of this number were abroad, whose complements were 9,800 men.¹

Fifty-three were employed as convoys to the trade or cruising round about Great Britain and Ireland and in the Channel, to protect those Kingdoms from invasions, to secure our trade, annoy the French, and other necessary service, which ships employed 9,200 men.

Seventy-one ships remained at Portsmouth,

¹ These 44 were made up, according to the Monthly List of Admiralty as reprinted in Parliamentary Debates, as follows :

	Rate	Ships	Men	
East Indies	3	2	975	
	4	2	660	
	6	1	140	
	sloop	1	90	
		6	1865	
Plantations	3	1	500	
	4	10	3345	
	5	3	810	
	6	9	1260	
	sloops	9	640	
		32	6555	
Mediterranean	4	3	980	
	6	2	320	
	sloop	1	80	
		6	1380	
				Total
			Ships	Men
			44	9800

Plymouth, in the Thames and Medway, whose companies amounted to 30,596 men, of which 23,868 were come but only 16,955 were mustered. Of these 71, 13 being of the line, returned with Admiral Boscawen on the 17th November in a sickly and shattered condition, and neither ships nor men were ready to return to sea; 24, of which 19¹ were of the line, were just returned with Mr. Byng and Mr. West from their cruise; 21 in the docks or but lately commissioned, and consequently having few or no men.

Thirteen only remain ready for immediate service on any occasion.

By the foregoing state of the fleet it appears there was not any means of sending a Squadron to the Mediterranean, had it been ever so necessary, before the end of December 1755.

And by this state it appears how few ships of so large a number were able to go to sea; and it must never be forgotten by those who would impartially consider the conduct of an Admiralty that a naval strength should never be rated by the number of ships in harbour, or even in commission, but only by that number which is fitted, stored, victualled, and manned: while the ships are incomplete in any of these respects they are useless, as if they did not exist. In times when the fleet is most effective a large proportion of it will always appear ready for service, without being so: as for example, all ships lately commissioned, all ships returned from long cruises, in docks or waiting to go there, all ships whose men are sick or on shore or absent with leave, all ships from which men have been taken and sent to others going on immediate service, all ships in want of

¹ Should be 17.

provisions or stores—from a deficiency of which French Squadrons are often useless for months together—ships in this state may parade at Plymouth or Spithead, their true state being known to the Government only ; they may create terror and respect abroad, they may produce confidence or blame at home, but they cannot sail or fight till they are what is called by the seamen ‘ completely fitted for the sea.’ Most of the errors in reasoning in Admiralty measures arise from supposing that all ships in commission are able to go out and to remain always at sea : it is scarcely to be conceived how generally these vulgar errors prevail, even in those who are least subject to error in other respects.

INTELLIGENCE.

[Papers relating to the intelligence received from abroad as to the forces fitting out in the French ports, and the intentions of France, follow. These are divided into periods: the first, from the beginning of the year 1755 to the end; the second from the end of December 1755 to the 6th April, 1756, and also some information received after that date. As to what has been already written, the writer in the memorandum says: 'The perusal of the foregoing papers, it is apprehended, will be a sufficient justification of the conduct of the Administration up to this point during this first period. They fully prove the sending a Squadron into the Mediterranean before the end of December 1755 was, as things then stood, unnecessary and inconsistent with the probable safety of this country.']

A State of the Intelligence relating to the Preparations at Toulon received between January and the End of December, 1755.¹

P.—Imports the Intelligence comes from Mr. Secretary Pitt's Office.

Ad.—From the Admiralty Office.

A., B., C. or D.—From the Earl of Holderness.

¹ This is numbered paper No. 5 in the document.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 122. P.] 10th February. Rec^d. 26th February 1755.

Four days ago arrived two English ships in four days from Toulon ; the masters assure me that there was 24 ships of war in that harbour besides 3 on the stocks and a 70 gun ship was careening ; they were told by several of the officers that orders were come to fit out the whole fleet in all next month ; they were admitted to see the magazines and stores which appeared to them to be in great order and in such readiness that with a proper number of riggers the whole fleet might be fitted for the sea in a very short time.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 123. P.] 24th February. Rec^d. 17th March 1755.

My last despatch was dated the 10th instant, since which no vessel is come in from Toulon, nor any further news from thence about the naval armaments at that port.

Cartagena—Consul Banks.

[No. 51. P.] 12th March. Rec^d. 2nd April 1755.

The accounts from Toulon say that the French are fitting out 36 large men of war there, with many other less ships of war ; that they work very hard to have them ready for sea ; that the Great Admiral of France is to have the chief command ; that all the merchant ships to the number of 400 are stopped in the south ports of France in order to man these ships ; that the

large merchant ships are to be transports for a great number of land forces, but for what place designed is not known. This account is believed to be true.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 124. P.]

28th April. Recd. 14th May.

Yesterday arrived His Majesty's ship *Dolphin*, Captain Scrope, in thirteen days from Marseilles, who confirms they are not fitting out any ships at Toulon, only one frigate, or barque and two xebecks to guard their coasts, and protect any vessels from the Barbary cruizers going to and coming from the fair of Beaucaire.

Genoa—Captain Buckley.

[No. 1. Ad.]

9th May. Recd. about 31st May.

There is a report here brought in by a tartan from Marseilles that eleven days ago orders had been published by beat of drum in that place for all seamen to repair to Toulon, where orders were come for to begin to fit out what ships they have there, which, by the best accounts I can learn, are but few that are in a condition to go to sea.

Geneva—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 176. P.]

17th May. Recd. 31st May.

As yet there is not the least preparation carried on in either of the two ports, Marseilles and Toulon; and of 15 or 18 men-of-war lying at Toulon there is not one hitherto that is fit or in a condition to put to sea.

Advices.

[No. 3. B. 2.]

Recd. 5th June.

They have orders at Toulon to equip 6 ships of the line and three frigates, viz. :

Le Téméraire	.	.	.	74 guns.
L'Espérance	.	.	.	70 „
Le St. Esprit	.	.	.	70 „
Le Lion	.	.	.	64 „
Le Sage	.	.	.	64 „
L'Orphée	.	.	.	64 „
La Rose	.	.	.	36 „
La Pomone	.	.	.	30 „
L'Atalante	.	.	.	30 „

These are independent of the 4 frigates and two galleys which they were at work upon, when these orders came, and which are just finished : 'Tis said these frigates and galleys are not to be employed against the corsairs, neither is their destination known.

They have not begun yet upon the nine ships at Toulon, but they will as soon as the Inspector of the Marine has this week inspected those ships, as is always done upon fitting ships out.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 177. P.]

8th June. Recd. 21st June.

Hitherto there is not one ship of war fitting out at Toulon, and the troops disposed in Dauphiné, Languedoc, and Provence are quiet in their quarters and have not so much as the least order to move or to keep in readiness ; they consist of 60 battalions, of which there are 20 in Dauphiné, 30 in Languedoc, and ten in Provence.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 125. P.]

10th May. Recd. 23rd June.

By a person from Toulon in eight weeks, I am informed that no other preparations were making in that port, only to fit out the xebecks as mentioned in my last despatch.

Advices.

[No. 6. B. 2.]

Recd. 1st July.

They do not hurry about the nine ships in Toulon harbour: they are careening such as want it and rigging them, but employ few hands about it, which looks as if they were only put into commission thro' precaution, to be ready in case of need, tho' the sailors belonging to these nine ships have orders not to go out of the way without leave.

They have actually at Toulon and on the stocks 28 ships of all rates, [the] greatest part whereof can be got ready. They have rigging in plenty in the storehouses, and the artillery complete; but they will not find it so easy to get men.

The four frigates are ready to sail whenever they receive orders, but it is uncertain whether or not they are going to the Mediterranean to protect the trade.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 178. P.]

19th June. Recd. 1st July.

As I have no pretence for troubling your Lordship with a letter by this post, but the transmitting the enclosed sheet of intelligence, I shall take up but very little of your time; tho' great part may be looked upon as conjecture I would

not take upon me to suppress it, as there are two facts mentioned therein that are confirmed by a number of letters from several parts of France, namely, there being a considerable number of pilots from Toulon ordered to go to Sweden and to bring from thence 12 large ships that have lately been built there for the French, which are likewise said to have on board a vast quantity of iron cannon purchased for the service of the Crown, tho' I am apt to believe that point is somewhat exaggerated in the enclosed.

Advice enclosed.

[No. 179. P.]

3rd June. Recd. 1st July.

Several pilots are set out from Toulon for Sweden to bring from thence, as it is reported, 12 ships of the first rate which have been built there, loaded with 600 pieces of cannon bought in that Kingdom and which they were in want of, besides 12 other ships said to be upon the stocks in the same country and for the same destination: the French flatter themselves that by means of these ships, added to those they have already and those of the Spaniards, who as they pretended are to make a common cause with them, they will be in a condition to cut out so much work for the English both at home and abroad that it will be impossible to resist them; this may be exaggerated, but it seems, at least, that they intend to make attacks on more than one side and that they move more than one spring.

Advices.

[No. 8. B. 2.]

Recd. 19th and 22nd July.

They begin at Toulon to hasten the equipment of the 9 ships there; they are getting the rigging

on board and ammunition, and the sailors have orders not to go above a day's journey from thence and to muster every Sunday before the Commissary of the Marine.

Advices.

[No. 10. B. 2.]

Recd. 6th August.

Orders are sent to Toulon to equip with all expedition all the new ships there, and to get the old ones in condition for the same purpose, which they are doing very diligently.

Some companies of foot are expected there, who are to embark with the Marines who are exercised daily.

The arrival at Toulon of two expresses and their earnestness to see the Intendant of Marine has greatly excited the public curiosity. Add to this that an Extraordinary Council was held immediately on the arrival of the first express, at which all the principal officers of the Marine assisted, [and] the Council assembled again the next day; 'tis thought to be an affair of the utmost importance whatever it be, since their arrival they have doubled the hands which are at work in fitting the 9 ships there, which are expected to be equipped before August.

Six ships more are put into commission, all rate ships, which they are at work upon to equip so that there will be a Squadron at Toulon of 15 sail ready to put to sea before the 18th or 20th of August; they are all to sail together and to take on board about three months' provisions; their destination is not known. Many say, tho' it is only conjecture, that they are intended for Gibraltar. Be it as it will, never was a greater hurry in that port than at present.

Mahon—Captain Edgcumbe.

[No. 5. A.]

7th August. Rec^d. about 27th August.

My last letters from Marseilles of the 1st of August assure me that no orders have arrived at Toulon for fitting out any ships, though they have received intelligence of the two men-of-war being taken by Admiral Boscawen's fleet; and I am credibly informed that they are in great want of naval stores at that port and that they have not sufficient artillery to equip the ships that are there: however, their Lordships, I hope, can't fail of having certain and early information of the motions of the French, as I have ordered the Captain of the 'Dolphin' (who is a clean ship) to proceed to Villa Franca and send you an account of the intelligence he can procure, and if any number of ships are fitting. I have directed him to learn if possible for how long they victual, and to watch their proceedings till well assured of their destination and then send an account thereof by express.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 126. P.]

9th August. Rec^d. 27th August.

Letters from Marseilles of the 27th and 29th past advise that no preparations were making at Toulon towards fitting out the fleet at Toulon.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 180. P.]

16th August. Rec^d. 27th August.

I am informed that no armaments or warlike preparations were as yet making in the ports of Provence, and that tho' a declaration of war seemed to be the general expectation, the only orders they had hitherto received from Court were

to send out some few tartans to the several stations in the Mediterranean and the Archipelago to caution their home-bound merchantmen to be upon their guard and not to proceed homewards without convoys, which should forthwith be ordered and appointed; this, those accounts mention, had already been executed at Toulon and Marseilles.

By letters of the 4th instant I am informed that the officers of the Navy at Marseilles had within these few days received their caulkers, in order to send them to Toulon to clean the ships they have there in a condition to put to sea, which are but few, as there is a great want of cannon and naval stores in their magazines which are quite exhausted; but these letters add that the greatest want in those parts was of seamen, who for the most part were absent, employed on board their trading vessels and in their fisheries, on which account particularly a declaration of war with England was greatly apprehended, as these must all unavoidably fall into our hands, and thereby the fitting out a Squadron be effectually taken away for some time.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 79. P.]

16th August. Recd. 30th August.

The last letters from Toulon say that all the master builders belonging to the yards were commanded to repair immediately to that port, but that hitherto nothing had been done towards equipping any of their ships. It is said that a body of twenty thousand are preparing to form a camp at Valence in Dauphiné; some say it is to exercise their men, others give out that it is to be a corps of observation, which is intended to be ready upon all occasions.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 127. P.]

16th August. Recd. 10th September.

On the 14th instant arrived a ship from Cadiz in 28 days and four from Marseilles. The master informs me that he left 9 sail of men-of-war in Cadiz bay and that the Formidable was very leaky. That before he left Marseilles orders came from the Court to recruit their Marines and to mount the cannon on the batteries, but no orders were arrived to that day to fit out any ships at Toulon.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 80. P.]

23rd August. Recd. 10th September.

No orders have been as yet given for enlisting any sailors at Toulon ; there are about 20 ships in that port, including both large and small ones, but I have been assured that there is not artillery sufficient to equip them.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 181. P.]

28th August. Recd. 10th September.

I have letters of the 15th instant which mentions the Court of France having purchased of the Genoese 3 new built 80-gun ships, which it was expected would be soon sent into Toulon. My correspondent adds that with regard to the 5 ships that have long been on the stocks there, they go on but very slowly and cannot be fitted out for service for some time ; they are still in those parts in great want of hands, few or none of their seamen who are employed in their trading vessels being yet come in. This same person informs me now that with regard to the ships, and particularly the artillery which he had mentioned,

they were in expectation of from Sweden, the Court of Stockholm had declined furnishing them with so large a supply of both, as they apprehended it might in the present circumstances be construed by England to amount to an open espousal of the French interest and to an act of hostility.

The necessary preparations for assembling a camp at Valence in Dauphiné are actually making, but there is no talk of any other in the southern provinces of France. Hitherto the augmentation in the French troops consists only in 10 men per company, and the scheme of adding four new companies to each battalion seems to be laid aside : most of the accounts from France agree now in saying that on the repeated representations of their merchants and their Council of Commerce it has been determined not to take no one step on the Continent this year until their trading vessels and the seamen employed in their fisheries are returned, and, in the meanwhile, to make all such necessary preparations during the winter as will enable them to pursue early in the spring those measures which the then circumstances and the dignity of the Crown of France will require.

Advices.

[No. 15. D.]

Recd. 12th September.

It is reported that orders are gone to Toulon to fit 19 ships with all possible expedition there. There will be this year in Flanders and the Daijs de Hanau (*sic*), 80 battalions.

Advices.

[No. 18. B.2.]

Recd. 16th September.

Count De Grammont a-sea went from Toulon the 26th August to Genoa with a shipbuilder to

examine the ships of the line, 3 of which are on the stocks, which the Genoese offer to sell to the French, with their rigging and guns all mounted; they likewise offer to sell 5 or 600 pieces of cannon, which, 'tis thought, will be purchased.

No armaments are making at Toulon, but they work incessantly in the building of new ships, and whenever orders come they will be able to fit out 10 or 12 ships of the line, exclusive of frigates, in a very short time.

Madrid—Sir Benj. Keene.

[No. 1. P.]

1st September. Rec^d. 16th September.

The enclosed is an authentic list of the French fleet at Toulon, with the circumstances it is in at present.

List enclosed.

[No. 2. P.]

Contains a list of 18 ships of the line besides frigates at Toulon, very few of which were fit or in a condition to go to sea. The Océan and Foudroyant, two of Galissonnière's squadron, it is said, would not be fit to go to sea till the end of 1756.

Nice—Mr. Cabanis.

[No. 169. P.]

25th August. Rec^d. 16th September.

The French are augmenting their land forces and are actually recruiting in Languedoc and Provence: last post orders came to Toulon to fit out 16 sail of men-of-war, and the next day they began to caulk them, and [I] am assured by very good hands that they immediately sent for all caulkers from Marseilles and the adjacent parts.

Genoa—Mr. Consul Birtles.

[No. 128. P.]

30th August. Recd. 16th September.

Letters from Marseilles, of the 22nd instant, confirm the recruiting of the Marines and mounting the cannon on the batteries.

Orders were also sent to fit out eight sail of ships which was afterwards countermanded; a person who came from Toulon in four days confirms the above advice and further affirms that no preparations were making to fit out any ships.

Letters from Nice, of the 25th instant, advise that a courier was arrived at Toulon, with orders to the Intendant to fit out 17 ships with the utmost diligence.

A vessel is just arrived in four days from Marseilles; the master confirms that orders had been received for equipping the ships at Toulon.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 81. P.]

30th August. Recd. 16th September.

Last week an express arrived at Toulon from Versailles with orders to equip with the utmost expedition 17 ships. I am informed they are ready at work and have taken off all the hands which were employed about those merchantmen, which were upon the stocks in the neighbouring dockyards.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 182. P.]

4th September. Recd. 16th September.

The enclosed paper contains a pretty exact and particular account of the present situation of affairs in the southern provinces and ports of France, where it is hardly possible the French

can, for some time, fit out a considerable Squadron for the sea.

Intelligence enclosed.

[No. 183. P.]

20th August.

They have built at Toulon since the last peace or there are upon the stocks in all 14 ships or frigates ; they may, perhaps, refit 10 or more old ones ; those who exaggerate say 18, but there are only 3,000 sailors in the department including old men and children. They have neither cannon, ropes, nor materials to make any ; they thought to get these things from Sweden or Denmark, whereas yet they have not thought fit to allow it. It has been said that the Court of Versailles had bought three ships at Genoa ; the Consul of that nation, residing at Marseilles, knows nothing of it nor will he believe it. But if it should be true, these ships would neither have the necessary cannons nor sailors.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 82. P.]

6th September. Recd. 19th September.

All the Marines in France with the utmost expedition (*sic*) and cannon are mounting on the batteries.

Genoa—Capt. Hervey.

[No. 8. Ad.]

3rd September. Recd. 19th September.

The French have in all at Toulon 28 sail, great and small 13 of the line with 4 frigates, and six xebecks are now fitting out for the sea, with the very greatest expedition. They carried, some few days ago, all the carpenters, shipwrights, and caulkers that were to be found among the shipping

at Marseilles and La Ciotat. Seamen are taken from all their vessels and ports ; among the remainder of the ships there are 4 large new ones which prove so leaky that they do not now attempt to fit them, and are of 74 and 64 guns ; two large ships which are on the stocks are to be got ready, if possible, in all next month ; many guns will be wanting for these ships, as in proving them all they have found 900 deficient and incapable of service. Men [they] are in great want of, as their Levant trade are all out, among which are computed to be upwards of six thousand seamen of theirs ; I am promised a list of the ships as they are. But as the number and progress of those fitting I take to be the material [matter], I shall not wait for the list.

They have despatched from Toulon a Mon^r. de Grammont with a lieutenant of a man-of-war, two shipwrights, and two caulkers to this port, which arrived in a felucca the 29th of last month at night ; they are come intending to purchase the three large ships now in this port and built here, as also 5 more that are on the stocks, and to obtain permission to build here themselves. 'Tis rumoured, and I believe with some foundation, that this officer is to endeavour at sending away as many seafaring men of this place as he can collect, and also that he is to purchase what timber and masts he can get, of which there are certainly some here ; but I am pretty credibly informed that the Republic will not consent to their taking any men if they can prevent it, nor on any account admit of their building here on their own plans, not caring to give any jealousies to our Court at this time. I am also told this morning that orders have been given to tell their officer that the ships in port and on the stocks are already

contracted for, but of this I yet want confirmation, tho' I know for certain that the Republic, if possible, will prevent their being sold to them.

Marseilles—Admiralty Advices.

[No. 7. Ad.] 1st September. Rec^d. 22nd September.

The 29th past orders came to Toulon to fit with all expedition twelve men-of-war: to wit, one of 80 guns, three of 74, seven of 64, and one of 50 guns, in consequence of which orders they have begun to work hard. They had begun to work at making cables and getting all other things ready about a fortnight since. It is said this Squadron will be ready in about two months.

Besides those now fitting out, there are seven other ships fit for the sea, but these could not be got ready before next spring, were they in the intention to fit them out.

Hague—Advices.

[No. 9. A.] 19th September. Rec^d. 22nd September.

This paper contains a list of ships ordered to be fitted out at Toulon, the same as sent by Mr. Birtles in his letter of the 13th, received the 30th September, and therefore not copied.

Advices.

[No. 17. D.] Rec^d. 22nd September.

That twelve ships only are fitting out at Toulon, of which he encloses a list, agreeing with the former, which, it is thought, may be ready for the sea by the latter end of the year.

Advices.

[No. 21. B. 2.]

Recd. 27th September.

The officers of Toulon who were on board M. Du Guay's Squadron have orders to return to their department, whence some conclude that Squadron will be laid up, tho' it's more probable only part will be laid up and that some of those ships will be joined to the 8 which are equipping at Brest.

They press forward the armament at Toulon, and they have pressed all the carpenters in the country.

The Genoese are to have 2,200,000 livres for the four ships ready equipped, and 300 pieces of cannon which they furnish besides.

They are cutting down in Savoy near L'Aurée a wood of fine firs, which are to be carried down the stream. This is a purchase made by the undertakers in Toulon dock.

Besides the advance which the farmers general make to the King, they talk of a loan of 30 millions on the Post Offices for acquitting old debts and 18 millions tax on the King's secretaries. This is destined entirely for the service of the Marine.

Cartagena—Consul Banks.

[No. 52. P.]

20th August. Recd. 27th September.

I have no certain intelligence at present what is doing in France, but a master of a French vessel, who arrived here last week from Toulon, reports that there are at that place 26 men-of-war of the line; that is, 18 new ships built since the peace and 8 old ones which were all fitting out for sea, also 12 frigates and a great many smaller vessels, which were all fitting out. He also reports that

there are 6 ships of the line on the stocks and some of them almost ready for launching; but there is no depending on what these people report, as I have often experienced, but be assured I will not fail to acquaint you with every material circumstance or intelligence that comes to my knowledge.

Cartagena—Mr. Consul Banks.

[No. 53. P.]

27th August. Recd. 27th September.

I have received intelligence that 100 battalions are marching into Roussillon with great diligence, and that those troops are designed against Minorca and are to be transported thither by merchant ships now at Marseilles, and to be convoyed by all the men-of-war at Toulon.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 184. P.]

20th September. Recd. 30th September.

Several letters assure that preparations were making at Toulon for fitting out twelve ships of the line and six frigates. Tho' this I fancy is more than they really have in that port in a condition to put to sea, it is very possible the Intendant of the Marine may have received orders from Court to prepare a Squadron of as many ships as are fit for service: none of the letters I have mentioned above take notice that any supply of rigging and artillery, which was also greatly wanting, has of late been imported at Toulon from abroad.

Genoa—Mr. Consul Birtles.

[No. 129. P.]

13th September. Recd. 30th September.

Letters from Marseilles, of the 5th inst., confirm the equipping of 12 ships of the line, and 4 frigates at Toulon, which is also confirmed by the master

of a vessel, who arrived this morning in three days from Toulon, from whom I have learnt that they are in want of several materials and particularly of cannon. I transmit enclosed a list of the ships that are fitting out at Toulon :

[No. 130. P.]

	Cannon.
Le Foudroyant	80
Le Guerrier	74
Le Redoutable	74
La Couronne	64
L'Achille	64
Le Triton	64
Le Lion	64
Le Sage	64
L'Orphée	64
Le Content	64
L'Hercule	64
Le Fier	50
	<hr/>
Canon en tout	800

Avec quatre frégates.

This morning the Secretary of State assured me that the Republic are determinately fixed to observe a neutrality, and upon my complaining to him that the suffering the French to buy their ships or cannon would be incompatible with the assurances of the Republic's resolutions for a neutrality, he told me that the government had not any notice that the French wanted to furnish themselves here with ships or cannon, but that he would communicate to the Doge and Senate what I had mentioned.

¹ The actual total of the figures is 790.

Villa Franca—Capt. Scrope.

[No. 11. Ad.] 15th September. Rec^d. 30th September.

I am informed by General Patterson and Mr. Cabanis, the Consul, how that the French at Toulon are working night and day fitting out their ships, and that they go on very briskly.

Leghorn—Consul Dick.

[No. 12. Ad.] 19th September. Rec^d. 30th September.

Enclosed I take the liberty to send you a list of the ships which are fitting out at Toulon.

(N.B.—The list inclosed mentions only 11 ships of the line, the Couronne not being inserted.)

*Intelligence Received in October 1755.**Turin—Earl of Bristol.*

[No. 83. P.] 20th September. Rec^d. 4th October.

I send you S^r. enclosed an account of the maritime force of France in the Mediterranean.

Enclosed: state of the maritime force of France in the Mediterranean.

[No. 84. P.]

Ships: 15 ships from 66 to 80 guns; one only of 80 guns, the other from 66 to 76 guns; among them there is one leaky, and many others built of a bad wood, which will soon want refitting after they have been at sea.

Two quite unfit for service.

One upon the stocks, of 80 guns, to be launched the beginning of October, but will not be ready for sea this year.

Two upon the stocks from 60 to 70 guns. These are very backward, one having only her keel laid and the other not much forwarder.

Eight frigates from 24 to 40 guns fit for service.

One do. of 36 guns expected from America.	} These five ships are expected at Toulon every day.
Four xebecks upon a cruise before Sallee.	

Four bomb ketches.

Two fire ships.

Four galleys fit for service.

Two strong and large shallops equipped with 20 men and a culverin of 36 pounds ; with this they intend to sink the enemy's ships by running upon them and making their fire betwixt wind and water. The firing of this cannon is very quick, as it is immediately replaced by the means of a spring as soon as fired.

Total : 45.

List of the sea forces now getting ready at Toulon : Men-of-War.

One called the Foudroyant of 80 guns.

Eleven from 66 to 70 guns.

[Total] 12 ships of the line complete : [of] the equipage of these last, 80 pieces of cannon, and 10,000 men including sailors, troops, and officers are wanting ; at Toulon there is only cannon enough for their lower tiers, and to complete the second and third tiers scarce enough for six. To make up the deficiency they reckon upon the artillery, which the Republic of Genoa is able to sell them ; for which place a Captain of a man-of-war, a Master Founder and a Master Contractor, and a Master Caulker are lately set out : 'tis said they are to examine three large ships which are to be sold at Genoa, as well as the artillery, if any, that will do. If the said three ships should be purchased it is thought they will be equipped from Genoa, and will take in for ballast the artillery

bought there. If they cannot carry it all, some merchantman will be freighted to transport the rest.

They continue the new levies to complete the four companies and battalion, and to augment the companies of Marines from 50 to 100 men.

This fleet would be got ready with much more expedition if there was not so great a scarcity of money, insomuch that the ordinary workmen are six months' pay in arrears and the directors and others above a year. However, they say at Toulon that 24 millions are assigned over to pay the expense of this armament, which they expect with the greatest impatience.

There is yet no Commanding Officer appointed to the eight ships now in commission, which makes it impossible to know the destination of this fleet.

In consequence of an order received from Court, dated the third of this month, they are getting ready 25,000 quintals of biscuit for the use of their fleet.

Nice—Consul Cabanis.

[No. 170. P.]

15thth September: Recd. 8th October.

There was an order at Toulon from the Court of France to arm 17 men-of-war. That order has been changed and they are now arming 12 ships of the line, without doubt from the bad condition they find their ships in and the want of artillery, as your Excellency may see by the state I send enclosed of the maritime force of France in the Mediterranean, and of the armament they are making at Toulon. I must add here that the French will not find the assistance that

they expect from Genoa, as I know there is very little artillery there fit for sale.

[No. 171. P.]

[The state enclosed is verbatim the same as that sent by the Earl of Bristol, No. 84, P. (*ante*, pages 36–7).]

[No. 24. H.B. 2.]

[A List of the officers appointed to command the Toulon Squadron.]

Foudroyant	.	80	..	M. de la Galissonnière
Guerrier	.	74	..	de Marsillar (? Mercier)
Couronne	.	74	..	de la Clue
Redoutable	.	74	..	de Vilarzel
Achille	.	64	..	de Beaumont le Maître
Triton	.	64	..	Villars de la Brosse
Lion	.	64	..	de St. Aignan
Sage	.	64	..	du Revest
Orphée	.	64	..	de Raimond d'Eaux
Content	.	64	..	de Sabran Grammont
Hercule	.	64	..	de Rochemore
Fier	.	50	..	d'Erville

M. Galissonnière commands in chief.

M. de Marsillar (? Massiac) en second.¹

The four ships to come from Genoa are not yet arrived.

Here and throughout, the French names, especially of men, are extremely incorrect, frequently beyond recognition, and often assigned to wrong ships. This last may be part of the argument, and has been left unaltered, but the spelling has been corrected as far as possible. Mercier was actually captain of the Triton, as Villars was of the Guerrier. Massiac was commandant of the port, and had no command in the fleet, but succeeded Galissonnière, with the rank of lieutenant-general.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 131. P.]

20th September. Rec^d. 9th October.

Letters from Marseilles advise that four frigates will be ready to put to sea from Toulon by the middle of next month, but the great ships will require a longer time as they are in want of many very essential materials.

Advices.

[No. 25. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 10th October.

Within this month above 2,000 sailors have been sent from Marseilles to Toulon for the Squadron which is equipping there.

Villa Franca—Capt. Scrope.

[No. 13. Ad.]

22nd September. Rec^d. 11th October.

I have got the enclosed account from a person here, who tells me he has it from good authority from Toulon, and it may be so depended on.

N.B.—Enclosed is a state of the French force in the Mediterranean, Oct. 10. Agrees with that sent by the Earl of Bristol, No. 84.

Capt. Scrope.

[No. 14. Ad.]

22nd September. Rec^d. 11th October.

Since I wrote the enclosed there is a Captain in the Army arrived from Toulon, whom General Patterson sent for intelligence. He gives the following account: Eighteen millions of livres arrived last week at Toulon, and that they have got all the artificers from Marseilles, and every man in and about Toulon employed night and

day to fit their ships, frigates, and other vessels ; it is said [that they] will be certainly ready by the latter end of next month, that there is 6,000 seamen already at Toulon and 4,000 more expected hourly ; they are doubling an old eighty gun ship with 5-inch plank and [are] to fit her with cannon to be placed in the mouth of the harbour as a guard or floating castle to the port. This officer likewise says that they have at Toulon brass and iron cannon to the number of fourteen hundred, but the last article is doubted. I was obliged to send to the Post Office for my letter to enclose this account, therefore must conclude in haste for fear of losing the post. Herewith I send a list of the line-of-battleships fitting at Toulon.

(The list enclosed agrees with Mr. Birtles', No. 130, only that it makes the cannon of the twelve ships amount to 814, which is owing to the *Le Fier* in this list being said to be of 64 guns and in Mr. Birtles' only 50.)

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 85. P.]

27th September. Rec^d. 11th October.

The 13th of this month orders came to Marseilles for the building four men-of-war, which are to carry from 60 to 70 guns. Marquis Roux, an eminent man in that business, is the undertaker of this work. I have been assured that 18 millions of livres arrived last week at Toulon ; every artificer there, at Marseilles, or in the neighbourhood of those two towns, is employed continually, as all the ships and frigates are intended to be ready by the end of October. 6,000 men are at present collected together there, and 4,000 more are expected in a short time.

Villa Franca—Captain Hervey.

[No. 10. Ad.]

9th September. Rec^d. 11th October.

I have received a letter from the Consul at Nice as well as from the agent at Marseilles confirming the intelligence I sent you in my letter of the 3rd instant—only with this addition: that the officer from Toulon at Genoa is undoubtedly (at least) to carry them all the cannon he can pick up in order to equip the lower tier of their great ships, and for that reason I thought proper to write to the Consul at Genoa (a copy of which goes enclosed for their Lordships' perusal) that he may endeavour to prevent such a piece of service to the French, should the Genoese forget the assurances they have given to the contrary in regard to the ships and men which, I'm also told, is expected at Toulon.

Villa Franca—Capt. Scrope.

[No. 15. Ad.]

29th September. Rec^d. about 14th October.

Since my last of 22nd instant, I have sent the enclosed intelligence and list of ships fitting at Toulon. I have nothing more to add than that there are two French officers at Villa Franca watching the motions of the Dolphin, which gives me room to think they will have a look-out at sea for me.

Marseilles, 20th Sept.—The intelligence enclosed. You have herein the general list of the force at Toulon, and you may depend upon its exactness. They are fitting out 12 ships of war, which are those mentioned thus in the list. They say they may be ready in about six weeks' time. They are to be commanded by M. de la Galissonnière and all the officers have been commissioned that are to have those ships. Those on the stocks

will be launched in about a month at least, two of them, and the third next January. Besides these ships now fitting out, they may be able to put 7 or 8 more to sea next spring, but not before ; as soon as the stocks are clear five capital ships are to be laid down, they want cannon [and] they want timber, tho' some has been lately imported from Havre de Grâce and several cargoes more are daily expected thence. Masts for the capital ships are wanting, there is a pretty good stock of others ; hemp they have a quantity of, and other stores, and more are daily expected by Swedes, &c.

It is reported that four men-of-war of 60 or 70 guns are to be built here, but of this I doubt material of all sorts being wanting.

(The mark against the ships fitting out was omitted. This list agrees in substance with that sent by the Earl of Bristol.)

Advices.

[No. 26. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 14th October.

At Toulon they have a little abated of the haste they were making in the equipment there ; however, they will be able in a very short time to have the first 12 ships in condition to act ; besides the ships of the line they are fitting out frigates, and there will remain 8 large ships to be equipped if necessary. It is believed a part of the ships may be able to sail in 15 days or 3 weeks to protect the trade in the Mediterranean, and several rich ships have been forbid to sail from the French ports without convoy.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 185. P.]

5th October. Rec^d. 18th October.

The public reports which I mentioned in my letter of the 20th past, with regard to the orders

sent from Versailles for fitting out a squadron of men-of-war at Toulon have within these few days been confirmed to me by the enclosed account, which I think is incumbent on me to lay before you. It will inform you more particularly as to the strength of that squadron, the time by which the Court of France proposes it should be ready to put to sea and the degree of forwardness in which these preparations are actually in.

Advices enclosed.

[No. 186. P.]

There is nothing new besides the list of the Captains who are to command the 12 ships fitting out at Toulon, and which are to be ready next February: they have sent from Marseilles as many workmen as it was possible to be employed in refitting them. It is said the Republic of Genoa have offered to furnish a quantity of cannon and a number of sailors that are wanting in that department; they might at all events supply the want of sailors, which the crews of about 40 vessels which are expected loaded with cod [may supply], but this would be stripping one to supply the other. Each battalion of the troops of Ordnance is to be augmented with four companies and every troop of Dragoons with 25 men.

It is said for certain that the persons that had been sent to Genoa to examine the four ships that were to be purchased there have not found them fit for service.

The Sieur Roux called Croise, a rich merchant at Marseilles, has sent a plan to Court for building at his own expense upon certain conditions four men-of-war. As he is a man of vast and singular ideas, he pretends that this example will be followed

by all the other merchants, so that there will be many ships, if they do not want wood to build the first.

On the 10th inst. was to be given in at Toulon the price agreed upon for the carriage of the pieces of timber, the produce of 2,215 oak trees, which have been felled in different parts of the Provence.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 86. P.]

4th October. Recd. 18th October.

Mons^r. de la Galissonnière is appointed to command the 12 ships now fitting out at Toulon.

Advices.

[No. 28. B.]

Recd. 31st October.

Letters from Toulon, of the 12th October, say that the first of the squadrons equipping there will be ready in 8 or 10 days; all the officers and seamen are actually on board, and the Marines which usually serve on board the French ships are embarking. This squadron is composed of 7 ships of the line and 3 frigates. They have provisions for about 2 months only, and are to cruise in the Mediterranean, but are not to pass the Straits of Gibraltar. Orders are not yet arrived for the departure of this squadron. The other equipments go on more slowly; a ship of 64 guns was launched the beginning of this month and will be followed by another four of the same before the end—four ships from 70 to 74 guns will be finished before spring—about that time they expect a war and several merchants are forming societies for arming privateers, having ships ready for that purpose.

Advices.

[No. 29. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 31st October.

It was assured that 12 ships of war would be ready to sail out of the port of Toulon in the course of this month (October).

Advices.

[No. 31. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 4th November.

Besides the ships now fitting out at Toulon they have received orders for equipping with the utmost despatch the *Nymphe*, *Junon*, *Rose*, and *Topaze* frigates.

Gibraltar—Capt. Edgcumbe.

[No. 17. Ad.]

15th October. Rec^d. 5th November.

Upon my return to this bay I found Capt. Douglas has left orders for me to put myself under his command, and to direct all the captains of my squadron, except the *Fortune*, to do the same and join him without loss of time at Port Mahon ; these orders he has given in consequence of intelligence he has received that the French are fitting out 12 sail of the line and four frigates at Toulon, are pressing out of the merchants ships at Marseilles to man them, and that two Dutch ships are arrived there with cannon : in consequence of these orders I have made application to the Governor of this garrison for a detachment of troops and he has been so good to embark for me one officer, two sergeants, three corporals, and forty private men, and I hope their Lordships will approve of what I have done.

Advices—Marseilles.

[No. 16. Ad.]

15th October. Rec^d. 5th November.

They have worked but slowly on the 12 men-of-war they are fitting out, and only seven have their masts in; they have as yet had no orders for heaving down. They are in readiness to do it when those orders may come from Court. M. de la Galissonnière has been appointed to command those ships and all the captains have been named.

Orders are given at Toulon to fit out with the utmost expedition five or six frigates, and they work at them without intermission. It is not said what their destination is. Some people imagine they are to protect the trade against any insult of the Algerines, the Dey of that Regency having declared that if the news he had received of the French xebecks having taken one of his vessels for a Sallee cruiser and had made a prize of her, he was confirmed the French should pay dear for it.

It is said they have not been able to agree with the Genoese in regard to the ships they were in treaty for. Caulkers and ship carpenters are going from hence to hasten the fitting out of the vessels I have above-mentioned. I know of nothing else worthy to be communicated to you at present.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 87. P.]

18th October. Rec^d. 5th November.

The naval preparations at Toulon go on with expedition. Orders are said to have been given by the Court of Versailles for equipping four more ships of the line, but by the best accounts I can receive no one can guess where the French will find artillery or sailors for this armament. It is

reported here that his most Christian Majesty has purchased in Sweden nine large ships upon condition that the Swedes should man them. The Genoese have not yet disposed of the four which are upon the stocks in their port.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[Nos. 187, 188. P.] 25th October 1755. Rec^d. 5th November.

I have just now received the enclosed return.

13th October. Last week was launched at Toulon a man-of-war lately built, and orders have been sent for all the carpenters, caulkers, masters, and apprentices on the coasts of Provence and Languedoc to be at Toulon by the 12th inst., to be employed in the construction of the other ships that are upon the stocks and in refitting the 12 designed to form the squadron heretofore ordered.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 189. P.] 29th October. Rec^d. 10th November.

You'll please to observe from the enclosed paper that the French are using their utmost endeavour for fitting out their squadron at Toulon, as they must indeed be convinced that little is to be expected of their letters of reprisal, which it is said the Court of Versailles has lately issued, till they have a number of ships of war at sea to protect both their cruisers and trading vessels: what readiness they are in at Brest and Rochefort for that purpose we hear little of here, but with regard to Toulon all the letters that come hither or to Genoa from Languedoc and Provence agree that their squadron in that port can't be in a condition to sail till the beginning of next year at soonest.

Advices.

[No. 190. P.]

17th October. Rec^d. 10th November.

Ever since they have begun in earnest to work in the dock at Toulon, they press sailors for manning the squadron : no sooner is a merchantman arrived at Marseilles but the sailors are compelled to set out for Toulon, and yet I do not hear of any positive orders from Court for the entire armament or sailing of the squadron, and those sailors perhaps are only sent to Toulon to get the rigging in readiness.

Leghorn—Consul Dick.

[No. 21. Ad.]

27th October. Rec^d. 18th November.

I have received the letter which you did me the honour to write me the 4th instant, and beg leave to trouble you with this to acquaint my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that I have intelligence from Toulon that 5 large ships of war were to sail from thence the 23rd inst.; it was said there that they were going to Algiers to demand the four ships retained there, about which I took the liberty to write you the 20th inst.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have reflected that it is most probable these 5 ships are going to bring home their trade from the Levant. If I should get any notice of this I shall not fail to give advice of it to whoever may command at Mahon, but in those cases opportunities does not always happen, which makes me beg the favour of you to acquaint me if I may, on any such conjectures, send a small vessel with an express.

Villa Franca—Captain Scrope.

[No. 22. Ad.] 27th October. Recd. 18th November.

Enclosed I send you an account of the fleet fitting out at Toulon, by which I find no part of the Toulon fleet will be ready for sea till February or March. I therefore think it my duty to proceed to join Mr. Edgcumbe according to his orders, for which purpose I shall sail by the first opportunity.

(There is nothing material in the enclosed account.)

Leghorn—Consul Dick.

[No. 162. P.] Without date. Recd. 18th November.

I have intelligence from Toulon that 5 large ships of war were to sail from thence the 23rd inst. It was said there they were going to Algiers to demand the four ships detained in that port.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 191. P.] 8th November. Recd. 28th November.

The hint the enclosed paper contains with regard to the five frigates actually fitting out at Toulon—and to a scheme of sending supplies to Canada from the Mediterranean as less able to be suspected, and thereby more likely to escape the vigilance of our squadron and cruising vessels in the ocean—seems to deserve some attention.

Advices enclosed.

[No. 192. P.] 27th October. Recd. 28th November.

The five frigates at Toulon it seems are no longer destined for Algiers; altho' they were to be got ready immediately, they are not ready yet.

Money is wanting, the workmen withdraw for want of pay, and the work goes on but slowly. They are, however, employed in sheathing of them, which seems to denote a long voyage. This, and the report that prevails that four western ships have been hired secretly to take in provisions, gives room to think with some foundation that the frigates and provisions are designed for Canada, where they will endeavour to send them unknown to the English, who will not suspect that anything can be sent thither from the Mediterranean.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 193. P.] 15th November. Recd. 28th November.

The enclosed relations contains the whole of what I have received this week with regard to public occurrences.

[No. 194. P.] 3rd November.

They go on very slowly with the frigates at Toulon; part of the workmen have been discharged, and more are discharging every day; there remains only to careen and refit them, in case anything should be found damaged when they come to lay them down; all manner of provisions are wanting in the magazines; they have been obliged to buy of some private persons at Marseilles calico for sails to the amount of one hundred thousand livres. The want of materials is the reason that the works are still carried on very slowly, altho' they have lately received two million of livres to be applied to the works and other expenses. It seems even that they have given over, or at least deferred, the armament of the twelve ships that were to sail from Toulon besides the five frigates.

Advices.

[No. 37. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 29th November.

The fleet at Toulon, consisting of 7 ships of the line and 4 frigates, is ready for sailing and only waits for orders. The officers lie ashore and the provisions consumed on board are replaced.

Villa Franca—Capt. Edgcumbe.

[No. 24. Ad.]

Rec^d. 17th November.

Having given the Deptford a large heel I sailed from Minorca the 8th instant for this port, in order to gain what intelligence I could of the situation of the Toulon squadron, and arriving here, the 11th, sent an express over to Marseilles the next day, the return of which I hourly expect, and have in the meantime procured the state of the French Marine in the Mediterranean to the 20th of last month, which I am pretty well assured may be depended upon, and therefore enclose it for their Lordships' information.

*Capt. Edgcumbe—State of the French Marine at the
20th November 1755.*

[No. 24. Ad.]

Guns.

Le Foudroyant	80
(designed for the Admiral)	
Le Guerrier	74
Le Redoutable	74
Le Téméraire	74
La Couronne	74
L'Hector	74
L'Achille	64
Le Lion	64
Le Vaillant	64
L'Hercule	64
Le Constant	64
Le Triton	64
Le Fier	50

	<i>Frigates.</i>	Guns.
La Junon		50
La Rose		30
La Gracieuse		30
La Royale		30
La Topaze		24
La Nymphé		26
La Minerve		30
L'Oiseau		30

Four bombs.

Two fire ships.

Four xebecks.

Fourteen galleys, 4 only in condition of service.

One bark of 24 guns, no masts in.

The ship Le Ferme fitted to serve as a fort in the middle of the road of Toulon of 90 guns.

The ship Océan upon the stocks; they work upon her with all diligence.

L'Enflame¹ of 50 guns. } newly launched.
L'Orphée of 64 guns. }

La Pomone frigate of 30 guns, upon the stocks very far advanced.

Two frigates (keels only laid) of 30 guns without any likelihood of their being finished, wanting timber.

Number of the ships of war which are to sail by the first orders :

Twelve ships of the line at Toulon. { Commanded by Chev^r. Digain²; all the captains named.
Eight ditto ditto

At Brest there are 7 ships of war upon the stocks.

Number of guns actually at Toulon, viz. :
1,636 pieces of cannon from 18, 24, to 36 pounders.
500 ditto deducted for the fortifications

¹ Note in MS. supposed to be L'Oriflamme. ² Du Guay.

of the town, and to guard the entrance of the port. 1,136 remains for the service of the Marine.

There is arrived at Toulon an order to arm (besides the 12 ships of the line in commission) five frigates reported to cruise on the coast of Barbary.

It appears that they work with great diligence and despatch on this armament, having in employ about 6,000 men. Yet all the intelligence acknowledge that they will not be able before the months of February or March next to send out either the 12 sail of the line or 5 frigates, having no guns on board either the one or the other.

The arsenal of Toulon is indifferently furnished with stores, wood excepted for building, which is greatly wanted, altho' the 5th inst. there arrived two Tartans loaded with wood from the coasts of Romagna and the Kingdom of Naples. It is reported that Genoa will furnish France with 4,000 seamen, which is not at all probable.

Money is greatly wanting, altho' the 27th of March 1755 there arrived at Toulon 500,000 livres French money by land and they obliged the trading part of Marseilles to furnish 40,000 livres weekly to pay the workmen whom they bring from all places, who have scarce subsistence.

This, Sir, is genuinely and truly the state and condition of affairs.

'Tis reported here that a Chef d'Escadre of the Brest fleet in his return from America, had sunk, which wants confirmation ; but I can assure you as a strict truth that all the marine people at Toulon are intimidated when they reflect on the great force of the English by sea and the progress they make.

20th October 1755.

They continue to raise recruits very briskly for the augmentation of 4 companies of each battalion. Since the above, letters from Toulon of the last week say that they have discontinued working upon the naval armament, which has been confirmed by several patrons of barks [which] came from thence the 13th December 1755.

Villa Franca—Capt. Edgcumbe.

[No. 25. Ad.]

21st November. Recd. 4th December.

As to what is going on hereabout you may depend on what follows :

Orders have been given since last week to fit out with great expedition 5 frigates that had been worked on some time before, but a stop was put to it. They will be ready to sail in all next week at farthest. Their absolute determination is not known, but it is surmised, and with great likelihood, that they are going to Algiers.

As to the fitting out the 12 large men-of-war which was begun in a hurry, that now is going on but slowly, tho' everything is preparing that in case the orders were to come they might be soon ready. It is the opinion of the generality that they will not go out till spring. What I write you on this head, you may be sure, is the true situation of affairs at the time I write you. If at any time a change may happen I shall, if I know how, let you have advice of it.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 195. P.]

20th November.

The last mail brought me the enclosed relation.

[No. 196. P.]

10th November. Rec^d. 4th December.

They go on very slowly in fitting for the sea the 12 ships at Toulon, notwithstanding the great numbers of hands employed for that purpose. The five frigates are ready; they only want to be careened and armed, which they do not seem to be in a hurry of doing.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 88. P.]

15th November. Rec^d. 4th December.

By the last accounts I have received of what is passing at Toulon, I hear that only one of the last commissioned frigates has put to sea, and that in general the destination of the whole number of them is unknown. Some people imagine that they are to defend the coasts, others say that they will be ordered to Algiers to demand all the French who have lately been put into chains there, because some French xebecks had lately destroyed the crew of an Algerine galliot, which carried the Emperor of Morocco's colours, but it is more commonly believed that they are intended to protect the merchant ships that pass to and from the Levant.

Advices.

[No. 39. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 9th December.

It is said the design of France is to fit out everything that is capable of being so, to divide the whole in two fleets—one at Toulon the other at Brest—to fall, with force, upon the English squadrons which are dispersed and, by means of an invasion, to make a powerful division.¹

¹ The word is 'division' in both MSS. Perhaps a copyist's error for diversion.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 89. P.] 22nd November. Rec^d. 13th December.

According to the best authentic accounts from Toulon, I am assured that all their men are employed in equipping the 5 frigates which I mentioned in my last despatch, that are intended for Algiers to reclaim the French prisoners and to demand satisfaction for the insults offered to their nation.

Leghorn—Capt. Edgcumbe.

[No. 26. A.] 28th November. Rec^d. 20th November.

I have only time to add that the frigates fitting out at Toulon are one of 50, one of 30, and three of 24 guns.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 197. P.] 6th December. Rec^d. 20th December.

The enclosed paper contains all I have received by the last post.

Intelligence enclosed 24th November 1755.

Advices.

[No. 198. P.] 24th November.

The five frigates at Toulon are ready to sail, but still in the harbour; only one of them went into the road the 19th instant: a person on board of her writes that in a fortnight he hopes to send more positive news of the time they shall set sail. People do not know what to think of this slowness.

The two western merchant ships taken into the King's service are still at Marseilles. All that is known about them is that they are to go to Toulon.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 199. P.]

13th December.

I have this instant received the enclosed.

Advice enclosed.

[No. 200. P.]

Recd. 25th December.

At length the 5 frigates are all in Toulon road, but is not known when they will set sail. The two western ships that were to join them were still at Marseilles and do not make any disposition for it. The Intendant at Toulon has taken a list of all the western ships in that part of their burthen, strength, and the number of cannons they mount, and that is all that is known about it.

Intelligence of the French intending to invade Great Britain, &c. Received before the end of December 1755.¹

Advices.

[No. 1. D.]

Recd. 21st February, 1755.

They are certainly fitting out at Brest 16 ships from 60 to 70 guns, 6 frigates from 30 to 40 guns, and 5 smaller ones, as also 3 ships of the line at Rochefort, one of 80, two of 74 guns; eleven battalions under the command of Brigader Dieskau are to be ready to embark at Brest early in the next month. They are destined for North America and are to be victualled for 6 months. They are in want of all kinds of naval stores and artillery for their ships.

¹ This paper is numbered No. 6.

[No. 2. A.]

4th February. Recd. 15th February.

The French buy up all sorts of stores and provisions at Amsterdam, which are sent to Brest and Rochefort. Two ships are already sailed for those parts, and two more are now actually in the Texel waiting for a wind to carry them thither likewise.

[No. 2. D.]

Recd. 27th February.

On the 21st instant a Council was held at Versailles upon advice from England, that 45 ships of the line were put in commission, in consequence of which fresh orders have been sent to the ports of France for hastening the preparations there ; you may depend on the advice I sent you some time ago that some of the largest ships will be armés en flûte and serve as transports for the troops that are destined for North America ; they will only have their upper tier and quarter guns on board, and those are still to come from Rochefort, They will carry from 4 to 600 soldiers and sailors : there are actually now at Brest 8,000 sailors, and near as many workmen. The enclosed list of ships fitting out may be relied on.

[The list not material to be copied.]

[No. 4. D.]

Recd. 15th March.

A quantity of artillery is arrived at Brest from Rochefort, but they are still in want of more, insomuch that the ships armés en flûte will not have more than 12 upper deck guns in each. They are still in doubt whether to send their troops to single ships or not. They are in expectation of a quantity of artillery from Sweden.

Recd. 23rd March.

People in general are much alarmed and surprised at the great expedition with which the

fleet has been fitted out in England. All the foundries in France are at work day and night. M. de Cromille, a Lieut. General and Inspector General, set out on the 19th instant for Brittany to review the troops and hasten the intended embarkation.

[No. 6. D.]

Rec^d. 30th March.

Positive orders are sent to Brest to embark the troops on the 10th of next month. M. de Cromille is actually at Brest, and Messrs Dieskau and Rastaing set out a few days ago for that place. The men-of-war armés en flûtes will be ready to sail by the 15th of next month at furthest.

[No. 7. D.]

Rec^d. 6th April.

Six more ships are put in commission ; there are vessels on the look out to know the force of the English squadron. M. Macnémara will sail with the American fleet and convoy them to a certain distance. Two small frigates are already sailed for North America, with orders and instructions.

[No. 3. A.]

8th April. Rec^d. 11th April.

A letter from France, of the 27th of last month, informs that in the night between the 18th and 19th past a squadron of 5 or 6 men-of-war with troops on board, sailed silently out of the harbour of Brest for America.

[No. 5. A.]

22nd April. Rec^d. 25th April.

Letters from Paris say that in consequence of the orders sent from Court to Brest, Mons^r Macnémara, with the fleet under his command, may have sailed from that port on the 16th.

That fleet consists of the following ships :

Ships.	Guns.	Captains.
Formidable.	80	Macnémara.
Entreprenant	74	Du Bois de la Motte.
Héros . . .	74	Montlouet.
Palmier . . .	74	Bauffremont
Bizarre . . .	64	Périer de Salvert
Alcide . . .	64	Hocquart
Éveillé . . .	64	Fontais
Inflexible . . .	64	Guébriant
Aigle . . .	50	Cousages

Frigates.

Fidèle . . .	30
Diane . . .	30
Comète . . .	30
Fleur de Lys . . .	30
Milite (? Mutine) . . .	30
Sirène . . .	26

The following ships have port-holes for the number of guns hereafter mentioned, but they actually carry no more guns than from 18 to 22, and will be used as transport ships for 3,000 men ; they will be convoyed by the ships mentioned above.

	Guns.
The Défenseur of . . .	74
Algonquin . . .	74
Dauphin Royal . . .	70
Espérance . . .	70
Actif . . .	64
Illustre . . .	64
Opiniâtre . . .	64
Lys . . .	64
Léopard . . .	64
Apollon . . .	50
Aquilon . . .	46
Héroïne (<i>hospital ship</i>) . . .	30

[No. 9. D.]

Recd. 3rd July.

The fleet consisting of 6 ships of the line and three frigates, commanded by M. Du Guay, are sailed from Brest. Mr. Macnémara still remains on shore, confined by the gout. The ten ships mentioned in my last letters are preparing with great diligence ; artillery is still much wanted at Brest.

[No. 10. D.]

Recd. 23rd July.

The ten ships fitting out go on but slowly ; they are two of 74 guns, 2 of 70, 3 of 64, one of 50, and two frigates ; they will scarce be ready before autumn. We have heard nothing of M. Du Guay and his fleet.

[No. 11. D.]

Recd. 24th July.

Since accounts have been received that hostilities were begun by the English fleet in America, an augmentation in the troops of 4 companies to each battalion is talked of.

[No. 9. B. 2.]

Recd. 25th-28th July.

They have begun to work again upon the eight ships at Brest, which were put in commission after the departure of the fleet which Mr. Macnémara convoyed to a certain latitude for America. Last week the Command^t. received an express from Court, since which they have worked hard on this equipment, which went on very slowly before.

Besides these 8, orders are given to equip four more, which makes 12 in all, viz., 5 of the line ; the others are frigates from 30 to 50 guns.

The number of workmen in the dock has been also augmented.

They are building three ships from 60 to 70 guns and two frigates of 36 guns, which are already pretty forward ; to judge by the haste that is

making, it should seem that they expect to want them sooner than was at first imagined.

It is certain the vigour with which the English push on their armaments in their ports gives apprehensions to the French Court, which, however, is not discouraged, and if their Navy should be worsted (as they begin to fear) they will have recourse to their armies.

Hague.

[No. 7. A.]

31st July. Recd. 3rd August.

They are packing up all the baggage of Prince de Soubise to be transported from Lisle to Dunkirk; the camp of Plaisance is no longer talked of.

The troops file off successively from all the garrisons along the coasts as well as the other regiments which come from the heart of the kingdom.

[No. 11. B. 2.]

Recd. 8th-11th August.

They work with double diligence at Brest in the equipment of 12 ships in commission and they talk of equipping all the ships there. They talk of sending three battalions to America to replace those taken by the English on board the Alcide and Lys, but they will make use of transport ships being sensible of the fault committed by fitting out ships en flûtes.

An advice boat was despatched July 23rd from Brest, with orders to M. Du Guay; some think she is to go from Cadiz to America, but she has no provisions for so long a voyage. M. de Cousay goes on visiting the coasts and is now at Belleisle; they are mounting the batteries and repairing those that want it. The St. Michael and Arc-en-Ciel are expected at Brest next month from America. They are building a new fort at Dunkirk on the sea shore to the right of the haven, which

will not be finished very soon as they can work only at low water. They are mounting cannon on the Rysbank. There are at Dunkirk four battalions of Marines, 2 of Royal Bavaria, 2 of Crown, and 2 Squadrons of Caraman Dragoons, horse and foot.

M. de Crenay is made Vice-Admiral of the Marine ; Messrs de la Galissonnière and du Bois de la Motte, lieut. generals ; de Bauffremont, de la Clue and a third in petto,¹ commodores ; and a great many pensions, of which there is no list. In every battalion of 12 companies, each of 40 men, they are to take 120 men in order to form four companies, so that in each corps there will be but 10 new men wanting in a company to complete them to 40 men ; this augmentation will take place next winter.

They are beginning to fit out privateers at Saint Malo.

[No. 12. D.]

Rec^d. 13th August.

M. du Bois de la Motte's division arrived safe at Quebec and has lost but 15 men out of all the troops on board him. M. Périer with his division is got safe into Louisbourg, so that the only loss the French have sustained is that of the Alcide. Mr. Du Guay with 6 ships and 3 frigates is expected to return soon to Brest ; his orders were to cruise a few days off Louisbourg, as many off Cadiz, and then to take his station off Cape Finisterre. The Irish Brigade is upon the coasts. The camp upon the canal of Saint Omer is broke up ; that under the command of the Prince de Soubise, it is said, will be formed on the 26th instant.

¹ *Pelto* (*Ital.*), ' In one's own breast, or private intention ; in contemplation. *E.g.* (1679), " They reserved them in their *Pelto*, to be made use of upon occasion." '—*N.E.D.*

[No. 12. B. 2.]

Recd. 15th to 19th August.

The Amaranthe returned to Brest the day after her departure, having sprung her mizen mast; the Anemone continued her voyage. They have lately augmented the garrison of Dunkirk with 300 cannoneers. The Rysbank battery is completed, so is that on its right called the Castultje; the battery is of 12 twenty-four pounders and six mortars. The great battery on the right of the port of Dunkirk is not near so far advanced. The English vessels go in and out freely hitherto; on the 7th of August 3 vessels went out, carrying four families who have left the place.

There are in Dunkirk harbour 63 vessels of different sizes, but there is no talk there of equipments, privateers, or even of the Pretender.

The Prince de Soubise, who assisted at the Grand Conference at Compiègne, is daily expected at Dunkirk. They are hard at work at Mardyck. It is reported that when the Prince of Soubise was surveying the fortifications of Dunkirk, the Commandant said it was pity to make those works to be demolished at the peace; to which the Prince replied, 'Don't fear; the resolution of the Court is taken when this place is put into a defensible condition, not to demolish it on the peace.'

No declaration of war is yet made at Paris, tho' all their measures tend to it. The *ordonnance* is published for augmenting the troops and repeated orders are sent to hasten the equipments. The chief motive for retarding the declaration of war seems to be to give time for the India ships to get home.

The Prince of Soubise is on his departure from Paris. The country people about Dunkirk are ordered to make and carry the fascines; the works there are going on, but no augmentation is yet made of the garrison.

[No. 13. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 19th August.

Great preparations for war are making on the French frontiers; the troops are in motion in the inner part of that kingdom, and the regiments have received orders to augment every battalion by four companies.

They enlist all that offers, even boys of 14 or 15. The Militia have orders to be in readiness. There is to be a camp at Berlement and another at Givet, and it is said the French will begin the war with some great stroke. The Prince de Soubise will be at St. Omer on the 11th August, from whence he is to go to Dunkirk where they work incessantly.

The camps of Richemont and Berlement, it is said, will certainly take place. The regiments intended for those camps have their days fixed to be there, and they will be assembled before the end of August. A camp is also talked of between St. Omer, Dunkirk, and Calais.

The works at Dunkirk advance apace. They are going to dry up the Moere and to begin on the canal from Aire to St. Omer. They propose to draw a line from Fort Rosendahl by the canal of Furnes to join the bank near the principal ditch of Dunkirk. They continue buying up, in the country of Liège and other places, great quantities of grain, hay, and oats for the magazines. M. d'Aubigny, resident of France, furnishes the buyers under-hand with money. They are still at work in the arsenals. A French general is expected at Gand in about 15 days, tho' war should not be declared.

[No. 13. D.]

Rec^d. 19th August.

The Prince de Soubise is expected at Dunkirk on the 12th, and Mr. de Comille on the 18th of this month.

[No. 14. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 27th August.

Orders are sent to the Governors of Brittany and Normandy to take an exact account of the inhabitants, in order to employ them along the coast as may be necessary. All things now seem to tend towards a rupture. Orders have been sent to the countries for the near assembly of the camps. The French Court have, 'tis said, made the proper arrangements in America for rendering the designs of the English abortive.

The Prince de Soubise arrived the 14th August at Dunkirk. The navigation there is still open; they are raising a new battery in a straight line at 80 toises distance to the right of the great battery, which goes on very briskly; these batteries are carried out towards the sea 60 toises farther than they were before the demolition. The garrison continues on the same foot, except that the Dragoons have orders to depart on the 18th for the camp, which is to be formed the 24th [at] Berlement; other camps are talked of.

There is a report that two vessels which went from this port, one bound to St. Domingo, were taken by an English man of war, notwithstanding which they affect here to talk of peace. The French are in motion in all parts to form their camps at Aimerie and Richemont, which are to be assembled by the 26th August. The *Thétis* sailed from Brest the 7th August, supposed to be gone to Toulon to fetch cannon. The *St. Michael* is expected to return thither from St. Domingo towards the end of August. The Marines are augmented to 50 men in a company, and the Guard Marines 70 for the three departments.

Two frigates lie ready at Brest to carry orders to sea. They are in pain for M. de la Motte, who has no way left to return but by the Straits

of Belleisle above Newfoundland. They have reported these 2 days at Brest that an English squadron is cruising between St. Mathieu and Ushant. They don't hasten to fit out the ships which are in condition to serve, which surprises people.

A captain in M. Du Guay's squadron has wrote from Cadiz, on 28th July, that the squadron was to sail on the 30th ; but reckoning from the 1st of August next they have but two months and one half's provision, yet 'tis said they are to go to America and to return to Brest in the middle of October.

The troops of which the camp at Valence, under the command of the Marquis de Voyer is composed, are Navarre, Joyeuse, Brionne, Nice, and La Roche-Aymon Infantry, Dauphin, and Languedoc Dragoons.

The camp of Richemont, under the command of Messrs Chevert, Lieutenant General, and de Poyne, Major General, is composed of Champagne, Orleans, Royal Polish, Rouergue, Lochman, and Planta Infantry with 8 regiments of horse, besides the Hussars of Linden, Turpin and Bercheny, and the Dragoons of Orleans and Bauffremont. That of Sambre will be the most considerable of the three, and the Prince of Soubise is to have the command. The Pretender has been in France ever since the 28th July, but it is not known in what part of the Kingdom he is.

[No. 2. C.]

Rec^d. 29th August.

The Ministers of France were never more perplexed, tho' they are very angry they are divided in their sentiments. Councils are held upon Councils, but nothing resolved.

An invasion of England hath been talked of,

but, on examination, the present situation of France hath been found very different from that of 1745.

*Dover—Mr. Barham (Agent of the
Packet Boats).*

[No. 317. P.]

31st August. Rec^d. 31st August.

My correspondent in France informs me that it is talked there that 5,000 sailors are ordered to Brest against the 27th of next month, and that all the fishing boats at Dieppe are ordered to sail from Boulogne and Calais, and that more troops are expected at Boulogne, there being at present 4 regiments of the Irish Brigade. A dogger arrived yesterday at Calais in her ballast, as has done within these 3 days, 3 or 4 more small boats. What service they intend them for is kept a secret, but no doubt they would have us believe the design of playing their old game with which they amused us the last war.

[No. 14. D.]

Rec^d. 6th September.

The Camp of Berlement, commanded by the Prince de Soubise, and that upon the Saar, commanded by Mr. de Chevert, were formed on the 26th August; they are so situated as to be able to join in 24 hours. There is a rumour of some design upon Ostend. Great diligence is used at Brest in completing the men of war fitting out at that port. A number of vessels of different sizes are ordered to Dunkirk, Calais, and Boulogne; some of them are actually arrived; Bulkeley's, Dillon's, Lally's, and Ogilvie's regiments are at or near Boulogne; the Royal Scotch at St. Omer, under orders to be at Calais the 3rd of October; Rooth's regiment is at Gravelines.

[No. 8. A.]

Rec^d. 8th September.

It is given out that an embarkation will be made at Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk because it is said the ships which are to return from the islands cannot pass, being prevented by the English, and they endeavour to make it believed, as if they had a mind to make a descent in Scotland to give a diversion to the English that they may by that means have a way open to send succours to the Indies. In the meantime the garrison at Boulogne has orders to keep itself in readiness. The regiment de Foix is at Montreuil.

[No. 15. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 10th September.

Things tend more and more towards war. Orders are given to fill all the magazines as if they were immediately to make a campaign; the Marines and body of Artillery are to be doubled.

At Brest they have launched the Sphinx of 64 guns on 21st August.

They continue to put the coast of Brittany in a good posture of defence, as also Belleisle in the sea. The Duke D'Aiguillon has the care of this.

They have orders at Bordeaux to victual 24 ships to serve as transports for the troops.

The French King has so much at heart the re-establishment of the Marine that the saving of 12 millions is to be entirely applied to that purpose.

They are very impatient at Paris for news from M^r. Du Guay's squadron, which must be gone from Cadiz on their return to Brest.

At Brussels they appear unconcerned at the French motions; the camp commanded by Prince Soubise is quite formed and they talk of moving towards the Rhine.

[No. 16. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 10th September.

The master of a small vessel arrived at Havre from Louisbourg reports that M. Du Bois de la Motte has taken in the River Saint Lawrence one English man of war of 70 guns and a frigate ; that the French troops are in good order at Louisbourg, as well as the prisoners at Halifax ; that their squadron only wait for a strong gale to disperse the English for them to return to Europe. This vessel came from Louisbourg in 24 days.

The St. Michael is returned to Brest from St. Domingo. She met with nothing in her voyage.

[No. 16. D.]

Rec^d. 12th September.

An embargo is laid at Havre de Grâce and Rouen. The same is expected in other ports.

[No. 17. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 13th September.

They are raising soldiers and sailors everywhere ; they are recalling the workmen from the different parts of Brittany whither they had been sent ; they are repairing with stone the different batteries and have been trying along the coast. Camps are talked of at Londernam and Quelerne.

The Blandford, an English man of war of 20 guns, is carried into Paimbœuf by one of M. Du Guay's squadron, who took her the 13th August between Cape Finisterre and Ushant. M. Du Guay was carrying her to Brest, but in a gale of wind they separated and she was forced to put into Paimbœuf. It is believed M. Du Guay got to Brest 2 or 3 days after.

Marshall Belleisle on the 1st September reviewed the Camp at Richemont which is in a line.

The four xebecks anchored at Cadiz the 10th

instant; on the 15th they had orders from M^r. Duc de Duras to return to Toulon; they were at Cadiz on the 18th. M. Du Guay's squadron sailed from Cadiz the 3rd September, 4 hours after receiving a courier from the Duc de Duras.

The camp of Berlement is broke up to go into winter quarters, but the place is not yet known.

There has been hitherto no change in the garrison at Dunkirk, but it is thought it will be soon reinforced. The Royal Bavarian Regiment is to go to Alsace to be the readier to recruit.

Thirty-four vessels have been stopped in the ports of Dunkirk, Calais, and Gravelines to serve in case of need: a number of carpenters are ordered in the same places along the coast to go to Brest and Toulon.

They are busy at St. Omer and the neighbourhood in making pickets and fascines. An embarkation is talked of for Scotland along the coast. The Pretender is said to be at Paris.

The Intendant of Dunkirk is returned from [the] camp of Soubise; the sluice is finished; they wait for orders from Court to open it.

[No. 19. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 19th September.

The *Éveillé*, *Inflexible*, and *Aigle* anchored, on the 5th, in the evening at Aix; they were detached from M. Du Guay's squadron with orders to stay in that road: 'tis thought they will depart again.

M. Du Guay returned to Brest with his squadron on the 3rd September, but met no other English ship in his way but the *Blandford*, which was carrying the Governor, Mr. Hamilton, to South Carolina.

The 3 Rochefort ships parted from M. Du Guay's squadron to return to their own port. A courier

is sent to Brest with fresh orders, particularly with an order to release the Blandford. Admiral Périer has orders to go to Brest to relieve M. Du Guay, who is very infirm. That squadron is ordered to remain in the road; their destination is variously talked of; 'tis generally believed they will go to assist the ships in America.

They press on the works at Dunkirk and the plan still continues of making an embarkation for Scotland where they hope to meet with assistance. An order is come to Dunkirk, to prohibit all classed sailors from navigating till farther orders, or without leave of their officers. The 11th September the boom was put across the harbour; they permit all ships to enter freely, but none of what nation soever can go out.

[No. 20. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 22nd September.

M. Du Guay entered the 3rd Sept. into Brest Harbour with 6 ships and 2 frigates from Toulon. The 3 ships from Rochefort are gone thither. M. Du Guay met nothing in his way from Cadiz but the Blandford, which struck to the Fleur de Lys after nine shot. The ships remain in the Road and all keep on board.

M. de la Galissonnière is to command the Toulon squadron, and 'tis believed M. de Conflans will command-in-chief the 3 squadrons if they join.

The chain at Dunkirk was laid but once, the evening of the 12th September; the next day an order was affixed at the port permitting foreign vessels to go in and out of harbour freely, but forbidding French vessels to go out.

They recruit apace the regiments of the Crown and Marines. The following is the State

of the Garrison of Dunkirk and neighbouring places.

Dunkirk	The Old Marines	4 Battalions.
	La Couronne .	2 „
	Royal Bavière .	2 „
Berg St. Winnex	Provence .	2 „
Gravelines .	Rooth .	1 „
	Isle de France .	1 „
Calais .	Le Forrest .	1 „
	Perigord .	1 „
	Lowendahl .	2 „
	Two free companies of Marines.	.
Boulogne .	Dillon .	1 „
	Lally .	1 „
	Bulkeley .	1 „
	Ogilvie .	1 „
Montreuil .	De Foix .	1 „

The 16 battalions and 28 squadrons are cantoned which came from the camp at Berlement, waiting for the assignment of winter quarters.

[No. 22. B. 2.]

Recd. 30th September.

The five companies for Dunkirk were to depart the 15th in the morning, but not the whole, for some are still on board M. Du Guay's squadron. The officers of the companies from Toulon are gone to their department.

The Aigle, which was to carry the English prisoners from Rochefort to Brest, is not yet arrived at Brest, no more than the Blandford, altho' the latter was expected in the road the 15th, having anchored the 14th at Berteau.

All the grenadiers in garrison at Flanders have orders to be ready to march, but it is not known to what place. The troops which compose the camp at Amerie, near Maubeuge, are cantoned about till further orders. The troops at Dunkirk are still encamped; they work hard there on the new works and the new canal, which is making quite to Lisle.

[No. 3. C.]

Recd. 30th September.

Orders are given to finish all the ships that are building in the forts of France, and their whole navy will be fitted for the sea as soon as possible. The taking of the French merchant ships hath much disconcerted their Ministry; they were in hopes they should have got home all their East and West India ships, to which their moderation for some time past may be attributed, but now the mask will be thrown off and the French King's Ministers in foreign Courts will have orders to talk another language. The animosity of the Court of France against England is inexpressible; it will be showed in every shape, that one may be persuaded the prudence of the English Ministry will render all their attempts vain.

Dover—Mr. Barham.

[No. 310. P.]

7th October. Recd. 8th October.

I mentioned in a letter which I had the pleasure some time ago to write you that orders were given by the French to collect together a number of vessels from their several ports of Rouen, Dieppe, and Havre de Grâce, &c., and to rendezvous at Calais and other ports in that neighbourhood: what their real design for so doing at that time, I hinted, was only to amuse. But [I] cannot help thinking now from the number of vessels that have

been brought into our ports and are daily taken bound to Calais, &c., but they have some scheme in agitation. Within these few days past I was informed from Calais that above ten sail have arrived there in ballast from Rouen, which draw but little water, and some of them of two hundred tons. And it is now no longer a secret that these vessels are actually in the French King's pay.

[No. 23. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 8th October.

Four ships of M. du Bois de la Motte's squadron are arrived successively at Brest, vizt., L'Entrepreneur, Léopard, Illustre, and L'Opiniâtre; the last was attacked September 20th, 15 leagues from Ushant by an English man of war which fired 8 guns, which was answered by the Opiniâtre, who continued her course, with 9 chase guns placed on the gunwale by the Council Chamber.¹ The English, having received much damage, retired at 10 in the morning. They would have taken the English ship, but [there] being a large ship at a distance they made the best of their way to port. The Opiniâtre had 2 men killed and 3 wounded. M. Moëlien, who commanded her, behaved bravely.

There are wanting of that squadron only the Algonquin and Apollon which are expected with great uneasiness. The Sirène remains at Quebec to bring news from thence in the spring. M. de Salvert stays at Louisbourg during M. Du Bois's retreat to amuse the English. 'Tis said Louisbourg is put out of danger of insults.

The particulars of their voyage are: that when they did not come by the great Strait between Newfoundland and the Isle Royal, but through the Straits of Belleisle, which they crossed

¹ 'Chambre de Conseil, the coach or cabin on the quarter-deck.' Lescallier's 'Vocabulaire.'

successfully notwithstanding the mountains of ice which they met continually, when they were got thro' the Strait near the great bank Monsieur du Bois told the officers they need not sail in a fleet, but each might make the best of his way to Brest. They met nothing in their voyage. They had plenty of provisions at Quebec. The English prize is gone from Brest, but the *Aigle* is not arrived yet from Rochefort. They are hard at work on the armament. Almost all the Cavalry is gone for Brittany and Normandy, Franche Comté and Burgundy. 'Twas on the 29th September the infantry began their march into winter quarters.

[No. 25. B 2.]

Rec^d. 10th October.

Within this month above 2,000 sailors have been sent from Marseilles to Toulon for the squadron which is equipped there.

[No. 4. C.]

Rec^d. 20th October.

No Court was ever in a more cruel situation than this at present; they have been led into a war by the repeated assurances the Duke of Mirepoix gave them, that however angry the nation was the King and his Ministers would never enter into a war. I know this was believed by the Council in general; they took their measures in consequence, and they were never more surprised than when the news came of the taking of the two ships in America. It is certain the King and the Ministry are greatly incensed at present. An invasion in Ireland hath been proposed, and to risk sending troops into Scotland at the same time; but on examination many difficulties arose. However, this is not laid aside. But I believe some attempt of that kind will be made if England refuses the last terms this Crown will

be obliged to make, by the distress they are in ; every ship in France will be fitted out and you may assure Court, that if peace is not made, some coup of great consequence will be struck.

Admiral Smith.

[No. 18. Ad.]

20th October. Rec^d. 22nd October.

Herewith I send you enclosed a letter received this morning from Captain Vincent, of the Greyhound in Gravelines' pits, relating to observations made at Dunkirk.

Intelligence Enclosed.

19th October.

Our cutter is just returned from Dunkirk where I sent her ; they lay there that night and came next morning. In the harbour they reckoned there was about 120 vessels, fifty of which were empty and detained there by a particular order from Court if not taken into the King's service, with a design, perhaps, more to alarm than intending any real embarkation. But, however that, we ought not the less to be upon our guard. The number of troops in the town, as usual at this time of the year, about 10,000. The two new batteries finished, and 12 pieces of cannon mounted upon the innermost, and those designed for the other 15 will be mounted in a few days.

[No. 19. Ad.]

21st October. Rec^d. 22nd October.

It is my duty to communicate to Your Lordships what I have this day been informed by one of our Dutch skippers just arrived from Dunkirk, that there is a great number of troops now in motion between the said place and Boulogne (at least 100,000 men), intended to embark with expedition to invade some part of his Majesty's

dominions (not far remote), only waiting for transports, which would be covered with a strong naval force. This with other circumstances heard from him appears not to be without foundation. A number of Dutch merchant ships sailed lately from Holland to different ports in France, [which] probably may be pressed there for transports.

Admiralty Advices.

[No. 20. Ad.]

23rd October. Rec^d. 25th October.

Enclosed I send you a letter received yesterday after post from Lieutenant Crispo in the Bird and Hand, armed cutter, from which their Lordships will observe the state of Calais and Boulogne harbours.

Intelligence Enclosed.

22nd October.

Last night I stood close into Calais where I could plainly discern about 11 sail of topsail vessels and about 26 one mast vessels, but their hulls I could not possibly discern. This morning just before the Edward and John joined me, I stood close into Boulogne pier heads and counted about 22 sail of brigs, snows, and sloops; they had mounted six guns on the larboard, and two guns on the starboard pier heads, and was very hard at work with a number of men erecting two batteries off Portie Point, which lieth to the south-west of Boulogne, about four miles; which is all the intelligence I can inform you of at present.

Admiralty Advices.

[No. 23. Ad.]

21st October. Rec^d. 31st October.

I herewith enclose you the account [I] directed the Lieutenant of the Blandford to give me of the

observations he made whilst he was a prisoner in France.

Intelligence Enclosed.

I found at Rochefort 6 ships of the line, of which four are ready to be fitted (tho' all lying inactive), two building on the stocks about half finished, one a 64 the other a 50 gun ship, with three frigates, lying at their moorings with no masts. At L'Ile d'Aix were two men of war, one a 74, the other a 64 gun ship, part of M. Du Guay's squadron who took the Blandford, refitted for sea. A frigate of 20 guns sailed from L'Ile d'Aix during my stay there, commanded by Captain McCarthy, but to what place is unknown to me ; there were also two slow ships ready to sail, but where I know not. Before I left L'Ile d'Aix there arrived two frigates, one from Canada the other from Martinico. On my arrival at Brest I found riding in the Road Admiral de la Motte on board a 74 gun ship (who was come from Canada, and, as the French officers informed me, brought four other large ships with him, which were in Brest Port), with M. Du Guay on board the Formidable, an 84 gun ship, together with the Héros and Palmier, two 74 gun ships; and two frigates soon after arrived from Canada : two ships, one a 74, the other a 64 gun ship, one of which went immediately into Brest Port as did Admiral de la Motte's ship, the other continued in the road. [On the] 16th October came out of the port a frigate of 24 guns and sailed immediately, as I was informed, for Canada. I observed as I went into Brest by night (for I was not admitted to go by day) in the port 8 ships that appeared to me of the line, just come out of dock with only their

standing masts and several frigates at the upper end of the harbour. I believe [there] were 12 or 14 other ships, but what they were I could not distinguish. I observed a large ship in the dock which I was told was a 64 gun ship : I left riding in Brest road M. Du Guay with three sail of the line and one frigate.

[No. 10. A.]

21st October. Recd. 31st October.

Letters from Dunkirk and other places along the coast mention embarkations to be made in February, and that, whether it is intended or not, they would have it thought that they intend to make descents in Great Britain or Ireland.

[No. 28. B. 2.]

Recd. 31st October.

From Paris we hear that dispositions are making in the French ports for an embarkation, which is not, however, believed, tho' they have hired several ships, some of which are gone to Brest, others to Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk. The grand battery on the right side of the port of Dunkirk is finished ; there are 12 guns of 24-pounders and 4 mortars. The 2nd battery on the right, which was broken down, is almost repaired. There are yet no appearances of an embarkation in that port. They are beginning to refit and put in order some ships which they intend to fit out as privateers. They are employed at Calais and Boulogne in the same way.

[No. 29. B. 2.]

Recd. 31st October.

They write from Brest that the King's ship the Bizarre, commanded by M. de Salvert, and the Défenseur were arrived there the 9th October from Louisbourg, from whence they had sailed, together with the Dauphin Royal, under the favour of a strong gale of wind which had forced

the English from the coast. The day after their departure they fell in with a squadron of eight English ships, which obliged them to separate, and they are under great concern for the Dauphin Royal, which was chased by two English ships of war.

Orders are arrived at Brest for arming in all diligence the frigates *l'Amethyste* and *Comète* of 30 guns, and the *Thétis* and *Hermione* of 24 guns. They will soon be ready as they only want refitting and victualling. It is thought they are to act with the *Héros*, the *Palmier*, and *Entreprenant*, which are in the road to convoy merchant ships or else to go before the ships which the India Company are in expectation of.

[No. 30. B. 2.]

Recd. 31st October.

From Paris we hear that the Dauphin Royal arrived, the 30th October, at the island of Aix near Rochefort, the 2 English ships which pursued her not being able to overtake her.

The *Espérance* and the *Aquilon* remain at Louisbourg and will take the first favourable opportunity to return. M. de Salvert says they ought not to be in pain about them. Besides those two ships, there only remains in America the *Sirène* which is at Quebec, and the *Flûte Outarde* which is at Louisbourg. At Rochefort they are fitting out the *Rhinoceros* to carry orders from the Court to their colonies. The armaments at Brest and Rochefort are carried on with vigour, but they do not so much hasten those at Toulon.

With regard to the ships that are building, they advance very fast in all the three ports. Three millions a month has been granted to the *Ministre de la Marine* for that purpose, but money alone is not sufficient to set the Navy of France

on the footing they wish to have it by next spring.

There are strong reports of designs of a descent in England and of embarkation on the coasts of Normandy, but there are yet no dispositions made for that purpose.

[No. 31. B. 2.]

Recd. 4th November.

One hundred Marines are arrived at Dunkirk, and they expect the rest of that corps who are to be exercised in the ship duty. There is not the least appearance of an embarkation at that port, tho' it should seem the principal one in such a case. They are equipping at Brest 2 privateers in expectation of leave from the French Court. It is affirmed that orders have been given for firing upon all English ships of war that may come within gunshot of the French batteries, but to permit all merchant ships to enter freely.

They talk seriously of deepening the harbour at Dunkirk, and for that purpose they will repair the sluice of the canal at Bergues.

[No. 32. B. 2.]

Recd. 12th November.

By orders from the French Court the *Améthiste* and *Fleur de Lys* of 30 guns each, *L'Emeraude*, *Héroïne*, *Thétis*, *Galatée*, and the *Cumberland* of 24 guns, are gone into the roads of Brest; they have each three months' provisions on board, and tho' their destination is not known it is thought they are to protect the commerce.

At Boulogne there are about 60 ships, all merchantmen and of different countries, [and] four battalions of the Irish Brigade are there; at Calais there are about 30 ships, and the garrison of that place as well as at Gravelines is of the Irish Brigade. There is no talk in any of

those three ports of privateers or of an embarkation, nor are there any troops cantoned in the neighbourhood.

The adherents of the Pretender say that he has been at Fontainebleau incognito, the last time the Court was there.

They expect the arrival of 200 Marines at Dunkirk from Calais, which are all recruits.

[No. 33. B. 2.]

Recd. 12th November.

All the Ships at Brest, which have been out, have received orders to disarm and refit, the Palmier only remains in the road and will not come into the harbour till all Mr. Périér's squadron shall be in the road; several frigates are arrived. They expect in a few days the state of the armament from Court.

M. Conflans's division is in less forwardness than that of M. Périér and it is not known that armament will take place, or if it will, only sail into the road. The *Espérance* and *Aquilon* are expected from Louisbourg, and sailors are coming in from the coast of Normandy.

[No. 34. B. 2.]

Recd. 15th November.

The augmentation of the French Infantry will produce 27,200 men; that of the Cavalry 5,160, Dragoons 2,560, Marines 6,000, without reckoning the light troops of which there is nothing yet determined.

Orders are given for repairing the batteries on the coasts of Normandy and Picardy, and for distributing arms to the Militia along the coasts.

[No. 11. A.]

Recd. 18th November.

There is nothing new from France. [They] continue to push their preparations as fast as possible, and it is said that Monsieur Machault

has presented a list of 62 ships of the line to his most Christian Majesty, which he engages to put to sea in the next spring besides frigates.

[No. 5. C.]

Recd. 18th November.

Different plans of an invasion have been proposed and laid before the Ministers of France, but they appeared almost impracticable in the execution. By one which was intended on the coast of England it was proposed to collect the transports in one or two ports, and that the Brest fleet should sail to cover the transports, but it was objected it would be very difficult, if not impossible to get such a number of vessels together as would be absolutely necessary to transport such a number of troops as were to be embarked; that it was not very sure their fleet should meet a fair wind to bring them so far up the Channel and to sail afterwards with the transports without meeting the English fleet, but that if they should be so fortunate their fleet could not escape on their return; that at the beginning of a war it was not prudent thus to escape (*sic*) their navy and such a number of troops as must be sent if they hoped to succeed in the attempt; that if their fleet should be destroyed the whole trade of France would be ruined, its colonies in the West Indies distressed, and the war by land retarded, if not rendered unsuccessful, for next year.

The attempt proposed in Ireland seems to be attended with less risk and inconveniences, but they say if the troops should land there the disorder and confusion would not be so great as if they landed within 30 or 40 leagues of the capital. Probably no resolution has been yet taken except that of alarming and putting our Court to a great

expense, but one cannot answer how far passion, resentment, and the French Ministers having a very good opinion of their navy carry them.

[No. 35. B. 2.]

Recd. 18th to 22nd November.

Politicians in France are divided as to the true motives of the tranquillity of their Ministry: some attribute it to the difficulty of fulfilling the fine money schemes of M. de Seychelles which he promised should bring in 180 millions by the 1st January, whereas 60 are not yet come in. Others say that the French Court make delays only to blaze out at once with a fleet of 200 ships to be collected between Dunkirk and Brest, which are to be escorted by 50 ships of war in 2 squadrons and are to invade England, the more terrible to the English as the troops are to march as soon as disembarked directly to the capital. Four more companies of Marines are arrived at Brest, which are joined to the two former. The 2 bilanders are arrived at Calais from Aire, loaden with cannons, which have been carried to the arsenal; they are 4, 6 and 12-pounders, half brass and half iron. All the regiments of the Irish Brigade have orders to hold themselves in readiness for marching, to join the others in the neighbouring ports. We learn from Douai that large quantities of ammunition go off towards Valenciennes. It plainly appears that France is making dispositions of war; it is affirmed that the light troops will be put on the same foot they were the last war.

[No. 36. B. 2.]

Recd. 29th November.

The frigates the *Comète*, *Améthyste*, *Héroïne* and *Thétis* are in the road of Brest, and wait only for a favourable wind to sail out; they are victualled for three months and their orders are to

protect the merchant ships. Two go the northward and two to the southward ; they are not to attack nor take, but only to defend. The present season retards the armaments as well as the ships which are building. Forty-eight Marine guards are arrived at Brest to replace those which have been appointed ensigns. On the 7th of November there was a violent storm of wind, which did some damage on the road of Brest. Two frigates have lately been built at Havre called the Blonde and the Brune for the King's use ; two frigates from Brest are to fetch them from thence, and after taking in provisions for three months they are to go on a cruize.

Marshall Belleisle has formed a project for invading Great Britain and attacking the dominions of Hanover.

[No. 37. B. 2.]

Recd. 29th November.

The ships the *Éveillé* and *Inflexible* are come into the harbour of Rochefort as well as the *Dauphin Royal*, which is to remain there instead of the *Achille* gone to Brest. The *Aquilon* which M. de Salvert left at Louisbourg is arrived at Rochefort. She sailed from Isle Royal in company with the *Espérance* which is expected every minute, as well as the *Fidèle* which was left at Quebec. The *Prudent* of 74 guns, commanded by M. d'Aubigny, went this day into the road ; and the frigate the *Zéphir* of 30 guns, the *Atalante* of 30 and the *Friponne* of 26, will go there to-morrow. They expect the arrival of the *Comète* and the *Améthyste* from Brest ; these ships are only destined to protect the trade.

Six hundred galley slaves are expected at Dunkirk, from Marseilles, to clean the basin. They work with vigour at Dunkirk in completing the

magazines ; convoys of provisions are daily arriving at Douai, which are put off directly towards Valenciennes. There are no other maritime dispositions in the neighbouring forts.

The following is a State of the garrisons :

	Battalions.
At Bergues	2
Dunkirk	8
500 Marines	
160 Cannoneers	
At Gravelines	2
Calais	5
Boulogne	4
Lille	10
Douai	14
Valenciennes	9
St. Omer	3

Cavalry.

Two Regiments at Douai.

Two at Valenciennes.

Four Squadrons at Lille.

The Irish Brigades augmented to 20 Marines in a company and the Cavalry to 14.

[No. 27. Ad.]

30th November.

One of the pilots of this town, who came from Calais yesterday and passed thither from Amsterdam by Ostend through Dunkirk, informs me that the vessels there [are], vizt. about 50 sail at Dunkirk, many with their masts out, and about 34 or 35 at Calais lay with their sails unbent and yards and topmasts down, and saw no signs of any movement in these ports.

[No. 38. B. 2.]

Recd. 1st December.

A ship and two frigates from Rochefort are to join M. Périer's squadron at Brest, which will consist of 5 ships and 4 frigates; the time of its departure and its destination are not known. The *Thétis* and *Héroïne* sailed from Brest with 30 merchant ships to the southward, but a south-east wind obliged them to put back again; the same wind keeps the *Améthyste* and *Comète* here. The *Blonde* and the *Brune* are expected from Havre. A new frigate has been launched at Brest.

The Ministry of France have appointed the officers to the ships without any regard to the recommendations of the captains, which they usually did. The King has likewise reduced the number of officers, which will occasion a great saving to the King. The squadron, under the command of M. de Conflans, goes on very slowly. The *Espérance* has been taken by the English in coming from Louisbourg. The *Aquilon* which came from the same place is arrived at Rochefort. Letters from Dunkirk say that the two batteries near the sea are completed; the first consists of 14 guns and 4 mortars, the second of 24 pieces from 16 to 24 pounders and 4 mortars. They have begun to refit an old ship called the *Baleine* and are taking in the carriages for her guns. There are no other maritime dispositions making in that, nor the neighbouring ports. There has been a review of the seven new companies of Marines; the six hundred galley slaves are still expected at Dunkirk.

[No. 39. B. 2.]

Recd. 9th December.

The French Court have a design of building frigates in the ports of Bayonne, Bordeaux,

Nantes, Rochelle, and Havre by private ship-builders ; the King's yards at Toulon, Brest, and Rochefort may be able to fulfil the design of having 40 ships of the line completed in the course of the year 1756. The King's ship-builders are employed in examining the several ports to accomplish the above-mentioned object, and the frigates, the *Blonde* and the *Brune* of 30 guns each, which are almost ready at Havre, are the first on this place. The French hope to put their Marine on a better foot than that of the English. It is said the design of France is to fit out everything that is capable of being so, to divide the whole into two fleets, one at Toulon, the other at Brest, to fall with force upon the English squadrons which are dispersed : And by means of an invasion to make a powerful diversion.

The first Battalion of the regiment of Aquitaine arrived the 29th November at Bergues St. Winoc and the 2nd is daily expected. All the damaged cannons and mortars are transported to Douai to be new cast, large quantities of wood for making gun carriages are likewise sent thither, and they work hard in making them. The troops that form the line from Givet to the neighbouring port are above 50,000 men ; they are divided in brigades.

[No. 40. B. 2.]

Recd. 10th December.

Orders are come to Rochefort for fitting out the *Chariot Royal* and *Hermione* to serve in protecting the trade. They are assembling quantities of rigging and putting the artillery in order.

The second battalion of Aquitaine arrived at Bergues the 30th November.

The views of the French Court seem to be to gain time till their fleet is put on a better footing.

Hague.

[No. 12. A.]

9th December. Rec^d. 13th December.

Notwithstanding there are 22 battalions of Militia in Normandy, they are going to raise an additional Militia there; they talk of the same in Picardy. Nothing is talked of but the war which is to be declared, and of fixing the Pretender on the throne of England in March.

[No. 7. C.]

Rec^d. 13th December.

All the search that is possible hath been made, and it cannot be found that any plan has been found by the Council of France for invading England or Ireland. It is certain no orders have been given, nor any of the steps taken, that must precede an embarkation of troops from France; when they are, some of them must come to knowledge, and notice will be given of what is doing. Hitherto nothing has been done in France, but to alarm and distress the Court of England.

Hague.

[No. 13. A.]

12th December. Rec^d. 15th December.

Letters from Dunkirk of the 5th December say that they are in expectation of the arrival of a number of troops which are to canton in the towns and villages. They make this cantonment amount to 70 or 80 thousand. They give out that they are to take possession of places of the barracks at Nieuport and Ostend, to favour the squadron which are to go into those seas. They expect M. Bart, son of the late Vice Admiral, to command the Marine at Dunkirk.

[No. 41. B. 2.]

Recd. 13th December.

From Turin we hear there is nothing new in that neighbourhood nor any disposition for an embarkation.

They continue working at the foundry and arsenal at Douai.

All the officers and soldiers absent on leave have orders to return to their regiments by the end of the month. The galley slaves are on the road from Marseilles to Dunkirk.

[No. 42. B. 2.]

Recd. 15th December.

The eight frigates which have been so long ready at Brest are at last sailed. The *Héroïne*, *Thétis*, *Galatée*, and *Cumberland*, are to convoy a fleet of merchant ships to the southward, and the *Fleur de Lys*, *Émeraude*, *Améthyste*, and *Comète* are to protect the ships going to the northward. The two last carry provisions for the *Blonde* and the *Brune* at Havre: the orders neither to attack nor take are revoked.

It was reported that four large English ships were seen off Brest.

The armament of the two squadrons goes on very slowly. That of M^r. Périer cannot be ready till January, that of M^r. Conflans till May.

One of the new basins is finished and they are blowing up the estacade which kept off the waters from the sea. The garrisons at Bouchain and Bethune are lately augmented. They are preparing stables at Bergues for two squadrons of cavalry; they are expecting two additional battalions, which seems to denote some attempt.

[No. 43. B. 2.]

Recd. 19th December.

Nothing new in the ports of France since the departure of the 8 frigates from Brest. A

reinforcement of troops is arrived at Dunkirk from Toulon and Rochefort.

[No. 44. B. 2.]

Rec^d. 22nd December.

A Courier arrived at Versailles the 14th December from Brest, with an account of the arrival of the *Sirène* frigate which came home from Quebec the 25th October; but the news she brought has not yet transpired. No account of the 8 frigates since they left Brest.

It will probably be insisted that as it appears from the intelligence received before the 11th March 1756, the Administration had reason to believe Minorca was intended to be attacked, and as Sir Edward Hawke did not sail with the western squadron, which consisted of 12 ships of the line besides 2 that joined him off Plymouth and some frigates, until the 12th March 1756, that, instead of being sent upon that service, Sir Edward Hawke ought to have been sent directly into the Mediterranean to the relief of Minorca; and in Paper No. 12¹ that objection is endeavoured to be answered, and the nature, usefulness, and absolute necessity of the western squadron is, for that purpose, deduced and explained.

The French large ships of the line in the ocean are all either at Brest or at Rochefort. These ports not being far distant and the French perfectly knowing their own coasts which enables them to keep near the shore and in shoal water, where we dare not follow them, the whole strength of their navy, exclusive of what they have in the Mediterranean, may join in short time and with little difficulty or danger. Even a part of these ships once fairly at sea may go to any of our possessions with a force much superior to what they can find there. Our colonies are so numerous and so extensive that to keep a naval force at each equal to the united force of France would be impracticable with double our navy. The best

¹ Paper No. 12 is the paper which immediately follows this paragraph.

defence therefore for our colonies as well as our coasts is to have such a squadron always to the westward as may in all probability either keep the French in port or give them battle with advantage if they come out.

The large French ships of war which return home either from a foreign voyage or from a cruise must go into Brest or the ports in the Bay, and an English squadron to the westward is the best, indeed the only, means to intercept them.

Succours sent from France to America are likely to be intercepted by westward cruisers, as several ships loaden with men and ammunition has been the last spring and summer.¹

The whole trade of France to her colonies, whether going out or returning home, runs such risk of being intercepted by our western cruisers that the French insurance is from 25 to 30% going out and from 40 to 45% coming home, a burthen which no trade can bear, and which must destroy it. The French fisheries are in the same situation.

All our trade, except that to the northward and the coasters, comes in between Cape Clear and Ushant, a station where the French cruisers and privateers might do infinite mischief if they were suffered to go out or return in safety. During the last rebellion² when the western cruisers were called in to defend our coasts, the number of captures and mischief done to our merchants were incredible. These are the benefits of which a western squadron is productive, and most of them we have actually received from it the last year. The French fleet was kept in, our coasts and colonies were unmolested, the French trade and the succours for America have been in part

¹ Sc. 1756.

² Sc. 1745.

intercepted, and our trade in the midst of war enjoyed all the security of peace.

The experience of last war¹ clearly shows the importance of a western squadron, and all our great successes at sea arose entirely from it.

These benefits are not cheaply gained. A fleet superior to what the enemy can send out must be always employed, otherwise the moment of weakness or absence may be seized; our ships must always be clean, otherwise the enemy coming fresh out of port may outsail us. Cruising in all weathers and often with tempestuous and contrary winds wears out the ships, the masts and the rigging, and ruins the health and costs the lives of the seamen; it often disables a ship in a week which has been three months in preparing, and it demands a great part of our naval force. Less than thirty ships of the line completed [and] manned will not keep twenty constantly at sea, even in the summer.²

¹ In the early years of the war with Spain 1739, no Western squadron off the Spanish Biscay ports was maintained. Sir John Norris, then Admiral of the Home Fleet, constantly urged in council that a squadron should be kept off the 'Nor'ward Capes' of Spain, which should be 'superior to the Spaniards in Ferrol and keep them from coming to sea or sending succours to the West Indies.' He repeated this advice continuously, but Sir Charles Wager, then First Lord of the Admiralty, would not adopt the proposal, and reinforcements were in consequence able to go to Cartagena and Havana, and home-coming ships of the various Trade and Treasure Fleets to return in safety to Santander and Coruña. 'Had my continued opinion been observed,' says Norris, 'in guarding those stations, very few ships going in or out of old Spain would escape our ships.' Later in the war d'Anville and several others sailed without molestation. It is to be noticed that the first real success of the Western ships was under Anson, who was now, at the time of this enquiry, 1st Lord of the Admiralty.

² Among some notes made on separate sheets of paper, which are bound up with the volume, the following remarks, bearing on the

If a Western squadron be of the importance, and productive of the purposes both offensive and defensive, which I have stated, let me ask whether any considerations should in prudence have induced the Administration to weaken it so as to be inferior to the French force at Brest and at Rochefort? Can anything excuse the want of a constant attendance on those squadrons which, whenever they sail, will carry terror everywhere and probable destruction somewhere?

By the best accounts there were twenty-two ships of the line at Brest, and eight at Rochefort: how many of these might be sent out could not be exactly known; but surely twenty of our large ships constantly at sea and attending their motions will not be thought too large a number. I am sorry to say we have never had or been able to have more than that number, seldom so many.

About the time Mr. Byng sailed to the Mediterranean, the Western squadron actually consisted of no more than 25 ships of the line in all, including those which went out in March and those which were obliged to come in. About the end of April there were only eight ships of the line in port and in good condition, of which but two were fit for immediate service, and those in want of men, notwithstanding the embargo and pressing from all protections in the beginning of March.

number of ships necessary to provide reliefs in order to keep cruising squadrons up to strength, occur:

'Fourteen for a Western Squadron would call for 18 or 19 to be appropriated to that service: ten for service in the Downs and Channel, and to be ready immediately upon any alarm, would require 12 or 13; together from 30 to 32. Besides these, 2 off Cape Clear, 2 off Cape Finisterre, and 2 in the fairway into the Channel, would be necessary for covering the frigates and sloops, and protecting the trade in their principal routes from depredations; and those 6 cruisers could not be constantly kept up with less than 8 sail.'

If the foregoing facts be true, from whence could an addition be made to Mr. Byng's ten ships without incurring a charge of madness or treason, and how could these ten have been earlier sent ?

The objections made to that squadron were groundless. They were fine ships, well and fully manned, had the advantage of a second rate with three decks, and a great prospect of joining Mr. Edgecombe. Without that junction the squadron which sailed from hence was a match for the French, considering how ill the latter were manned, and that they sailed in an extraordinary hurry and with a want of many things.

Though Mr. Byng sailed from hence with ten ships, because more could not be sent to Minorca, it was resolved he should be reinforced as soon as possible, which was accordingly done under the command of Mr. Brodrick ; and three regiments were at different times sent to Gibraltar with a purpose of sending more, if occasion should require.

INTELLIGENCE.

A State of the intelligence relating to the Preparations at Toulon and the design against the Island of Minorca, received between the end of December 1755 and the 6th of April 1756.

[Intelligence, received between the end of December 1755 and the 6th April 1756, and some intelligences received after April 6th as to projects of invasion here follow :]

[No. 3. B. 3.]

Recd. 3rd January.

Letters from Toulon say there are 12 ships of the line and four frigates in the road with their complements of men on board, and yet there is no talk of their departure ; but the common report is that they are to join the Brest squadron, and the small quantity of provisions they have on board shows that they are not destined for any long voyage. However, there is no appearance of their being to get through the Straits sooner than March, unless any unexpected event should happen ; they have received orders there to get everything ready that they can. A seventy gun ship was launched there, and they are now busy upon four more ships of the line, besides one of the eighty guns now upon the stocks.

[No. 4. B. 3.]

Recd. 6th January.

It is a false report that a fleet has sailed out of Toulon ; that which is getting ready there will not get out so soon.

[No. 5. B. 3.]

Recd. 12th January.

Marshal Richelieu will have a command upon the coasts of the Mediterranean.

Marseilles.

24th December. Recd. 13th January.

The five frigates have been in readiness to sail and have been in the road of Toulon some time waiting for their orders, which are not yet received ; but those to heave down six of the twelve ships I advised to have been prepared some time ago have been given by the French Court, and they work on them. It is also said here that orders to get them ready to sea with great expedition are given, in consequence of which they will be ready for sailing in three weeks' time. Nothing is said in regard to the destination of the frigates, tho' it is still surmised they are for Algiers, from which place no fresh news has been received.

[No. 6. B. 3.]

13th January.

The Duke de Richelieu is now peremptorily appointed to have command upon the coasts of the Mediterranean.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 201. P.]

27th December. Recd. 13th January.

Since my letter of the 13th we have had nothing material here, neither have I received the least thing from abroad till the coming in of yesterday's mail, which brought me the enclosed accounts.

Intelligence enclosed.

[No. 202. P.]

15th December.

Last week orders were given by sound of trumpet for all sailors to repair from Marseilles to Toulon : the 5 frigates are still in the road, to which has been added the galiot taken from the Algerines, which occasioned the slavery of all the French at Algiers. It is now said that there are but four of these frigates designed for the same expedition, and that the 5th is reserved for another ; they would insinuate that the four are destined to convoy the galiot to Algiers, but it is well-known that they only seek to adjust the affair amicably and to indemnify the Algerines, and it is very certain that these frigates have quite another destination, tho' they have not yet received sailing orders.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 90. P.]

20th December. Rec^d. 13th January.

I hear that the five frigates at Toulon are ready to put to sea with the first orders, but the armament of those 12 ships of the line, which are in the same harbour, goes on very slowly, and by all accounts must be many months before they will be in a condition to sail.

Nice—Consul Cabanis.

[No. 172. P.]

22nd December. Rec^d. 21st January.

There are five frigates at Toulon ready to sail and wait only for orders : one of 50 guns, one of 30, and three of 24 : as to the twelve ships of the line in commission, they work very slowly and will not be able to get them ready this winter : as to the land forces they recruit them with all imaginable diligence.

Gibraltar—Lieut. Gen. Fowke.

[No. 39. P.]

2nd January. Rec^d. 28th January.

The enclosed account of the French maritime force being just come to my hands, I take the liberty to send it you, tho' in all probability you have seen it before.

[No. 40. P.]

State and Condition of the maritime force of France in the Mediterranean fit for service, vizt. :

	Guns.
Le Foudroyant	80
(designed for the Admiral.)	
Le Guerrier	74
Le Redoutable	74
Le Téméraire	74
La Couronne	74
Le Lecture ¹	74
L'Achille	64
Le Lion	64
Le Vaillant	64
L'Hercule	64
Le Triton	64
Le Fier	50

Frigates.

	Guns.
La Junon	50 ²
La Rose	30
La Gracieuse	30
La Royale	30
La Topaze	24
La Nymphé	26
La Minerve	30
L'Oiseau	30

¹ So reported—evidently Hector.

² So reported. She was a 40-gun ship.

Two fire ships.

Four xebecks.

Fourteen galleys, four only in condition for service.

Four bombs.

One bark, no masts in, of 24 guns.

The ship *Le Ferme* fitted to serve as a fort in the middle of the road of Toulon, of 90 guns.

The ship *Océan*, of 80 guns, upon the stocks ; they work upon her with all diligence.

L'Orphée, of 64 guns } Newly launched and
L'Oriflamme, of 50 guns } now at sea.

La Pomone, of 30 guns, upon the stocks—very far advanced.

Two frigates, keels only laid, of 30 guns, without any likelihood of their being finished, wanting timber.

Number of the ships of war which are to sail by the first orders :

12 ships of the line of Toulon	{ Commanded by the Chev ^r . Dugain. All the captains named and ready.
8 ditto of Brest	

At Brest there are 7 ships of war upon the stocks.

Number of guns actually at Toulon.

1,636 pieces of cannon, 18, 24 and 36 pounders.

500 pieces deducted for the fortification of the town and to guard the entrances of the port.

1,136 remain for the service of the Marine.

There is arrived at Toulon an order to arm, besides the twelve ships of the line in commission,

five frigates, reported to cruize on the coast of Barbary. It appears that they work with great diligence and despatch on this armament, having in employ about 6,000 men, yet all the connoisseurs confess that they will not be able before February or March to send out either the 12 sail of the line or the 5 frigates, having no guns on board either the one or the other.

The arsenal of Toulon is indifferently well furnished with stores, wood excepted for buildings, which is greatly wanting, altho' the 5th October 1755 there arrived two tartans, loaded with wood from the coasts of Romagna and the kingdom of Naples. There is a report that Genoa will furnish France with 4,000 seamen, which is not at all probable.

Money is greatly wanting, although the 27th September 1755 there arrived at Toulon 500,000 French livres by land, and they obliged the trading part of Marseilles to furnish 40,000 livres weekly to pay the workmen, whom they bring from all places and who have scarce subsistence.

This, Sir, is genuine and truly the real state of affairs. I can assure you all the Marine people in general at Toulon are intimidated when they reflect on the great force of the English by sea and the progress they make. They continue to recruit for the augmentation of four companies the Battalion.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 203. P.]

8th January. Rec^d. 21st January.

The paper enclosed is the only plea I have to trouble you at present, as we have, since my last of the 27th December, had nothing with regard

to public transactions. By the enclosed relation, you will see that the same remissness and suspense still subsists with regard to the naval armaments in the south part of France, and I am convinced, whatever appearances the Court may put on, that the calamities with which the upper part of Provence has of late been afflicted must influence and slacken their preparations both there and in other parts of the kingdom.

[No. 204. P.]

22nd December.

It is now reported that orders are come by the last post for the frigates at Toulon to sail with the first fair wind; that which has the Commodore on board amounts to 50 pieces of cannon, the others have less; their destination is a secret, but it is probable that they will go and join those armed at Brest; and if the project of invading England is not laid aside, they will be employed in favouring the passage and landing.

[No. 205. P.]

9th December.

People are quite tired to hear so long that the five frigates at Toulon are ready to sail, whilst the English go on in the old way. The French have succeeded, however, in drawing from England itself part of 1,200 cannons that had been bought there in the name of a Portuguese, but the British Government having been informed of it have stopped the remainder.

State of the French Marine at Brest.

[No. 31. Ad.]

20th January. Rec^d. 30th January.

Le Soleil Royal .	. 80	Conflans
Le Courageux .	. 70	Périer
Le Tonnant .	. 80	Bauffremont

Le Superbe . . .	70	D'Aché
Le Défenseur . . .	74	De Blénac
Le Bienfaisant . . .	64	Chasteloger
Le Prothée . . .	64	Roquefeuil
Le Sphinx . . .	64	De Cousages
L'Amphion . . .	50	De Vienne
L'Aigle . . .	50	St Allouarn
L'Arc en Ciel . . .	50	Belingant
La Concorde . . .	30	Fouquet
L'Améthyste . . .	34	d'Abon
La Thétis . . .	24	de Nead (<i>sic</i>)
La Fleur de Lys . . .	30	Marnière
La Licorne . . .	30	Delly (de la Rigau- dière)
La Sauvage . . .	30	St Victoret
La Sirène . . .	30	de Breugnon
La Mutine . . .	30	de Courserac
La Comète . . .	30	de Renan
L'Hermione . . .	24	de Berry (<i>sic</i>)
L'Émeraude . . .	34	Périer fils
Le Cumberland . . .	30	Mesedern
La Galatée . . .	24	de Répord (<i>sic</i>)
	—	
	24	Vaisseaux

At Rochefort.

Le Prudent . . .	74	d'Aubigny
Le Dauphin Royal . . .	74	de Morogues
Le Juste . . .	70	Ch. Macnémara
Le Hardi . . .	64	des Gouttes
Le Éveillé . . .	64	des Portes (<i>sic</i>)
Le Capricieux . . .	64	de Tilly
L'Aquilon . . .	30	de Maurville
L'Atalante . . .	30	du Chaffault
L'Hermione . . .	30	de Chenoreau (<i>sic</i>)

Le Zephir	.	.	30	de Tréville
La Valeur	.	.	30	de Macarthy
La Fidèle .	.	.	30	de Lizardais
La Diane .	.	.	30	de Noe (? Desnos)

13 Vaisseaux

At Toulon.

Le Foudroyant	.	.	80	La Galissonnière
Le Guerrier	.	.	74	de Marscal (<i>sic</i>)
La Couronne	.	.	74	de la Clue
Le Redoutable	.	.	74	de Vilarzel
Le Téméraire	.	.	64	de Beaumont
Le Triton .	.	.	64	de la Brosse
Le Lion .	.	.	64	St Aignan
Le Sage .	.	.	64	du Revest
L'Orphée .	.	.	64	de Raimond d'Eaux
Le Content	.	.	64	de Sabran
La Fier .	.	.	60	d'Erville
La Pomone	.	.	30	de Corisiere (<i>sic</i>)
La Junon .	.	.	30	de Beaussier
La Rose .	.	.	30	de Costebelle
La Gracieuse	.	.	24	Marquisan
La Topaze	.	.	24	de Carné
La Nymphé	.	.	30	Calian

18 Vaisseaux

At Havre.

La Brune .	.	.	32	de Trédern
La Blonde	.	.	32	de St. Lazare

2 Vaisseaux

Total General . 57 Vaisseaux

By this state it appears the French were about the end of January 1756 fitting out

At Brest	8	ships of the line and	10	frigates
At Rochefort	6	ditto	7	ditto
At Toulon	12	ditto	6	ditto
At Havre			2	ditto
	—		—	
	26	of the line.	25	frigates

Intelligence received in February 1756.

[No. 8. B. 3.]

Rec^d. 1st February.

The Toulon squadron will not be ready before next month (February); it will be augmented with twelve ships, which will make in all 36 in good condition.

[No. 10. B. 3.]

Rec^d. 1st February.

There is 18 ships in the port of Toulon fit to put to sea, of which 9 are of the line, from 60 to 80 guns. It is reported that all the rest are ordered to be got ready, which, with the nine above-mentioned, would make 20 ships of the line; but all this cannot be done sooner than the month of April: besides, they are in want of cannon and can't tell when they shall have any, for the agreement with the Genoese is said to be broken off; at least, 'tis certain that for the purchase of ships of war is, which was owing to their neglect of making the inspectors their friends.

There are 9 ships upon the stocks at Toulon, and three were launched 2 months ago, one of which, the Vengeur, carries 70 guns.

Genoa—Mr. Birtles.

[No. 132. P.]

17th January. Rec^d. 4th February.

They write from Marseilles that after many orders, and counter orders, for equipping the fleet at Toulon a positive one was come, to get all the ships fit for the sea ready as soon as possible; the five frigates which have been so long a-fitting out are, at last, ready to put to sea.

The Dukes de Richelieu and Mirepoix have been nominated by the Court of France to command in Provence, and it is whispered they intend to make a descent from Toulon with a body of troops to surprise the Island of Minorca; that the orders and counter orders, which have been given from time to time about the Toulon fleet, has been with a view to make the necessary preparations to carry the plan into execution with the greater secrecy: the letters from France, received two days ago, mention that their troops were in motion in all parts: as yet they have not detained any vessels for transports; but the department of Marseilles have received orders to furnish 1,500 seamen for the squadron, and all the other maritime places have directions to furnish a number of seamen proportionable to their trade.

N.B.—Mr. Birtles' Letter, of the same date, to Mr. Cleveland (A. No. 30) is to the same purport.

Rec^d. 9th February.

Here are six frigates in the road of Toulon ready to sail upon the first orders.

[No. 15. B. 3.]

They go on briskly in fitting out the 12 ships of the line at Toulon, and they have already

careened four of the largest ; more than 800 workmen are employed every day in the arsenal.

Genoa—Mr. Birtles.

[No. 133. P.]

26th January. Recd. 11th February.

In my last I had the honour to mention a scheme which the French seem to have in embryo to surprise the Island of Minorca. I beg leave to assure you that it has been told me by some who have the best intelligences from France. The last letters from thence, received three days ago, mention that sixty battalions of Foot have been ordered to march into Provence, to be commanded by the Duke of Richelieu ; and some Letters say that they have embargoed between 60 and 70 vessels that was not known on what design : they continue sending all the sailors that arrive in the several ports to Toulon to man their fleet, and the five frigates which have been ready some time are still in the road, being victualled for three months.

Hague.

[No. 19. A.]

10th February. Recd. 11th February.

It is further reported that the project of an invasion is to be seconded with an embarkation upon the coast of Provence, where 30,000 men are ordered to assemble, and to make an attempt upon the Island of Minorca, which is apprehended as no very difficult undertaking.

[No. 16. B. 3.]

Recd. 14th February.

The 8 ships and five frigates which can be first got ready at Toulon are destined to cruize in the Levant seas, as well to protect the French trading ships as to interrupt those of the English

—that the rest of the ships equipping there are some of them destined to keep the navigation in the Mediterranean free—and the others to go in the Brest fleet: but such a junction seems to be very precarious. It is said that five privateers are to join the first squadron, which is victualled but for a few weeks.

Cartagena—Consul Banks.

[No. 54. P.] 7th December. Recd. 19th February.

By last advices from Toulon the French fleet was not then sailed, tho' only waited [for] orders: several battalions and squadrons were in motion towards the frontiers of Catalonia, and most of the ports of Provence crowded with pollaccas, settees, and tartans, &c., a great many of which were taken up for the Government's account.

Marseilles.

[No. 33. Ad.] 6th February. Recd. about 24th February.

Orders were received here by last post from Paris to seize on all English ships that might be in the ports of the Mediterranean belonging to the French. As yet the five frigates that have been ready long since for sailing have not received their last orders, but they daily expect them, no officer nor sailor being permitted to quit the ships. They work very hard on the twelve men of war; they will certainly be ready in all this month. Great encouragement has been given by the French King to engage his subjects to fit out privateers; large premiums are to be paid for every gun, and for each man taken from the English, which is to be augmented for those who take privateers or King's ships, and even those who distinguish themselves are to be made King's

officers. In consequence of this encouragement they have begun to prepare in this port a vessel that came here some time ago from Genoa. She is to mount twenty guns, and to have 250 men ; there is talk of more to be got ready.

Great preparations are making in these parts for the reception of 25,000 troops ; a train of artillery is preparing here ; as nothing seems to be apprehended in Italy, people's thoughts are turned towards Minorca : this is even the talk of the land officers here. Several boats have been built at Toulon, which mount each one gun 24-pounder, and contains 60 men therein, to serve as a floating battery against any man of war that may be becalmed on the coast, and to favour a descent if necessary.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 206. P.]

31st January. Recd. 24th February.

The paper enclosed contains all I have lately received ; other letters confirm the accounts mentioned therein with regard to the endeavours and diligence used at Marseilles for fitting out a naval force, for which the same orders are sent, and putting in execution in the French ports on the Ocean, particularly Brest and Rochefort, where they likewise talk of a vast number of flat bottom'd vessels, no less than 700 or 800 being ordered to be got ready and brought together. With regard to Toulon, however, these letters observe that it will be a very difficult matter to fit out for the sea, in any reasonable time, such a number of ships as is there talked of, from the great want they are in of two essential articles, namely, cannon and seamen.

Enclosing.

[No. 207. P.]

The invasion of England will be an easy matter after the junction of the French squadrons to cover the passage of their troops. It is very certain that orders have been received at Toulon to fit for sea with the utmost expedition twelve ships, and to arm immediately the two first that shall be ready, to the end that they may join the five frigates in the road and set sail together on the first notice. Probably this squadron is to join that equipping at Brest.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 91. P.]

24th January. Rec. 24th February.

Repeated orders have been sent to Toulon to careen and tallow with the utmost expedition five ships of the line, which are to set sail with the five frigates that are already equipped; the scarcity of sailors is so great, and the press has been so strong, that they have taken boys of all ages on board, and forced not only several artificers, but many servants to make up the complements of their crews.

Marshal Belleisle who presides over the northern and western coasts of France is to have 140 battalions under his command, and forty battalions are ordered to the Mediterranean Provinces, where Marshal Richelieu commands.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 92. P.]

31st January. Recd. 24th February.

The armaments at Toulon go on slowly. There is no money circulating; they have not artillery

enough, nor a sufficient quantity of building timber : most of the manufactures in the southern provinces of France are at a stand, for no ships venture out of their ports : their trade is declining, the merchants are breaking, the warehouses are filled as they have no vent for their goods, which are impairing in their shops.

Genoa.—Consul Birtles.

[No. 134. P.]

7th February. Recd. 25th February.

The letters from France received this day sevensnight brought orders to the Envoy and consul here to hire a number of shipwrights and caulkers to accelerate the fitting out of the squadron at Toulon, in consequence of which they have taken up into their service about ninety, and sent them away two days ago in feluccas to Toulon, their agreement being to be paid 90 livres per month. The French consul has likewise sent people into the eastern and western Rivas of this State to procure seamen, offering 24 livres French money per month to serve on board the fleet at Toulon, but hitherto has not been very successful and, by what I can learn, has not yet got 40 men.

This morning the Secretary of State desired that I would acquaint you that the Republic is truly sensible of his Majesty's regard for them, which they will cultivate on all occasions. At the same time he had directions to acquaint me that the steps which had been taken by the French envoy and consul in hiring the shipwrights and caulkers had been done without the Republic's knowledge, and if it had penetrated their design before these artisans had been sent away, a stop should have been put to their departure ; and

the Republic having had notice of emissaries having been sent into the Rivas for procuring of seamen, orders had been sent to the Governors of the maritime places to prevent any going into the French service, and a felucca which was carrying 14, that had been engaged at Porto Fino, has been stopped, and the master of the felucca confined in prison.

Letters of the 31st past, from Marseilles, mention orders being come there to stop any English vessel that might arrive, and the like order has been sent to all other ports in France. Letters from Toulon of the 29th past mention that they were working with all possible despatch to fit out a squadron of 12 ships of the line to join the 5 frigates: That the whole fleet would be in readiness to put to sea towards the middle of next month; that orders had been received to cruise against the English by way of reprisals, but that no letter of marque was as yet granted for privateers. It is confirmed that about 70 vessels have been embargoed, but as yet not certainly known with what design, but believed to make a descent on the Island of Minorca.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 208. P.]

14th February. Recd. 15th February.

I have nothing to add at present in point of public occurrences besides the enclosed account.

Enclosure 1.

[No. 209. P.]

2nd February.

The 30th of last month orders were proclaimed by sound of trumpet at Marseilles for all officers and sailors to repair to Toulon; they have, likewise, sent for all the sailors that are upon the

coasts of Languedoc and Roussillon in order to man the ships that are ready, for it is not very certain that they have either sailors or cannon enough to fit out twelve ; they continue to work at them, however, with the same activity. It is said that the 5 frigates are at last put to sea yesterday, and it is believed that they are gone to the Levant to make reprisals upon such English vessels as they shall meet with.

30,000 men, it is said, are going to Provence and not 30 Battalions, as were reported. A private person has bought at Marseilles within these three days 18,000 loads of corn for the Commissary of Stores to the army that is to be formed in that Province.

Enclosure 2.

[No. 210. P.]

4th February.

The frigates did not set sail the first nor second instant ; they had not even received the last orders, nor do I hear that they have received them since. They change their opinion so often that it is impossible to fix upon anything ; it seems, however, to be decided for the present that the five frigates are to sail by themselves, that they will be followed shortly after by four ships, and that the eight others will sail afterwards. Meanwhile they engage as many sailors as they can, and, either by chance or contrivance, a great many Genoese.

[No. 21. B.]

Recd. 26th February.

The regiment of Royal Artillery of four battalions is in motion ; one battalion goes to Calais, another to Havre, and two into Languedoc from whence the Duke de Richelieu, with the Toulon fleet, is to attempt the taking of Minorca ;

the train of artillery with each of the above battalions is from 20 to 30 twenty-four pounders and twenty field-pieces.

[No. 20. B. 3.]

Rec^d. 27th February.

There is a battalion of Royal Artillery and Engineers at Boulogne, and another at Havre, destined for the embarkation : there is, likewise, one upon their march to Toulon, where it is said they are to be embarked, with 14 battalions for an expedition against Port Mahon.

[No. 35. Ad.]

Rec^d. 28th February.

I have nothing to add to the letter I wrote you a few posts ago, everything being still in the same situation. No orders are come for the five frigates to sail, only to be in readiness to do so ; no officer or sailor allowed to come on shore. It is supposed that they will be joined by two men of war of 70 guns, which are almost in readiness to go to sea ; and all the other ships ordered to fit out are hove down, except that of the commanding officer, M. De la Galissonnière, who is soon expected, and who has wrote that he would not have his ship careen'd till he be present. They meet with a deal of difficulty to find sailors ; 1,200 have been ordered to be got in this port, as yet not near half that number have been rose.

The privateer I mentioned to you is getting ready with great speed, but as yet no commissions have been given.

Preparations are making for the reception of the 40 battalions of troops expected in these parts ; to what end they are to be applied is not known. People talk much of Minorca : at least, that a sham will be made in order to cause a division of the British fleets that are in the Channel.

*Intelligence received between the end of February
and the 11th of March 1756.*

[No. 21. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd March.

Letters from Toulon of the 14th February mention that the six frigates which were in the road have put out to sea, but that it was generally thought they were only gone upon a cruize, with a view of protecting the French trade. Mon^r. de Galissonnière was daily expected at Toulon to take upon him the command of the squadron fitting out there. That the camp of fourteen battalions and their future embarking for an expedition against Port Mahon was still much talked of there, and that 52 Pieces of battering cannon were taken out of the arsenal at Grenoble, which were to be sent to Toulon for that expedition.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 135. P.]

14th February. Recd. 2nd March.

The armament at Toulon is carrying on with the greatest despatch possible, and it is conjectured that the whole fleet there will be equipped for the sea before the middle of next month. Some advices mention that a train of large artillery had actually passed thro' Lyons in the way to Provence, and that the vessels, which I mentioned in my former to have been embargoed, are designed to carry into execution the project the French have meditated, and that two embarkations will be made at Toulon, one being designed against Minorca, and the other to reinforce the troops in their settlements in America.

The French Consul has reported that five frigates and three xebecks are sailed from Toulon to cruise against the English by way of reprisals.

The detention of the felucca and imprisonment of the patron, who was carrying the sailors that had been agreed by the French commissaries to go to Toulon, has put an entire stop to their views of raising any sailors in this State, and I have been assured that the orders have been suspended to those who had the incumbence to agree for sailors.

N.B.—Mr. Birtles' Letter to Mr. Cleveland of this date amongst the Admiralty Intelligence, No. 36, is to the same effect.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 93. P.]

14th February. Rec^d. 2nd March.

Marshal Richelieu is going to Parma ; He is to pass by Genoa, where it is imagined he has some secret commission to execute with that Republic ; the French envoy there has lately obtained a tacit permission from the State to choose a certain number of master builders to send to France ; he has already met with above 90, to whom he has promised 100 livres per month—they are probably set out by this time : he has also [supplied] privately to the Reverendi Ponenti,¹ one named Tosta, formerly secretary to Mon^r. Chauvelin, with his own warrant which authorises him to enrol sailors ; as fast as he meets with a considerable number of them, he has them conveyed away to Toulon.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 94. P.]

21st Feb. Rec^d. 2nd March.

Repeated orders have been sent to Toulon to hasten the workmen in that port ; the five frigates which have been ready to sail some time are not

¹ An ecclesiastical court, but with very general powers. Cf. Moroni, *Dizionario stor. eccl.*, s.v. Ponente.

put to sea till the 12 men of war are thoroughly equipped, that the whole fleet may go out together. The French are making out a camp of 25,000 men at Brignoles, a town about a small day's journey north of Toulon ; there is a report that this army is intended to make a descent upon the Island of Minorca, but I have made enquiry and am assured that no transports are preparing in any of their harbours ; a great number of workmen are daily passing by Nice from Genoa to Toulon.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 211. P.]

21st February. Recd. 2nd March.

I have nothing material to send from here in point of occurrences, but the enclosed relation.

[No. 212. P.]

Since the time that it has been given out that the frigates at Toulon were going to set sail, people seem to think the time for their sailing is not yet come. It is known, however, for certain that the building of the ships goes on but slowly, notwithstanding the number of hands that are employed.

Leghorn—Capt. Edgcumbe.

[No. 37. Ad.]

16th February. Recd. 2nd March.

By the time this letter reaches your hand, you will have received one I sent by the Princess Louisa to Villa Franca, and also what intelligence Captain Noel has been able to gain of the situation of the Toulon squadron, which now seems to be fitting out in earnest, and, from what I can learn here, are in great forwardness. It is said six are ready, and that they are equipping to the number

of 17, and that a very considerable number of troops are on the march towards the sea coast : some give out that they are also preparing transports, and others that it is intended the troops are to be embarked on board some of the men of war, who are to leave their lower tier behind them.

These preparations cause many speculations, but it is generally thought the French mean to surprise Minorca. However, I hope to be able in two or three days to give their Lordships a more exact account, which (if necessary) shall be sent by express, and in the meantime I must desire you to acquaint them that the Governor of Minorca is apprized of this equipment and making proper preparation for a defence.

Madrid—Sir Ben. Keene.

[No. 3. P.]

24th February. Rec^d. 6th March.

I reserve for this letter the account I am to give you of my proceedings, with regard to my advices concerning the intentions of the French to attack his Majesty's Island of Minorca ; and in order to it, I shall beg to refer you to the enclosed copy of my letter, dated the 13th instant, by the Messenger Johnson whom I despatched by the way of the Coruña ; it goes enclosed, accompanied with copy of my letter to Gen. Blakeney.

Since writing what goes before, I have received an express from Mr. Miller with a letter from Gen. Blakeney, of the 10th of this month, acquainting me with the informations that had been sent him from different parts, that the French intended to attack the Island of Minorca by an embarkation from Toulon.

His Majesty's consul at Barcelona has sent me an account from Marseilles which, with other intelligence, you will find in the paper enclosed.

*Extract of Sir Ben. Keene's letter of the 13th
February.*

[No. 4. P.]

The uneasiness I feel comes from the apprehensions of an intended attempt on his Majesty's dominions in the Mediterranean. I mean the Island of Minorca in particular. I am forced to this idea by the received accounts of the numbers of French troops assembling at and about Marseilles and on the coasts of the Mediterranean, which may be easily transported by the plenty of small craft in those seas, perhaps already provided in a secret manner ; and may be conducted and assisted by a squadron of twelve capital ships at Toulon, which, according to my advices, are ready to sail without fear of meeting with a naval force capable to intercept them.

As you could scarce have intelligence of the rendezvous of the French troops and of the other particulars contained in this letter, I have thought myself not only obliged, Sir, to acquaint you therewith, but likewise to write, as I intend to do by to-morrow's post, in a proper manner to General Blakeney, and shall send my letter to Mr. Miller, his Majesty's consul at Barcelona, giving him directions to dispatch a Minorquin xebec, of which there are generally several in that port.

By Tuesday's post I shall give the necessary hints to General Fowke, and desire both him and General Blakeney to acquaint Commodore Edgcumbe with my apprehensions by the first

opportunity either of those generals may have of seeing or writing to the commodore.

Advices enclosed.

[No. 6. P.]

Recd. 6th March.

The advices from several ports of this kingdom mention that the French fleet at Toulon was ready to put to sea, and would be composed of 12 sail of the line and 6 frigates, and that more ships were still fitting out at that port, which was supposed would join the fleet if they could be got ready in time; that vessels of all nations were strictly searched at Marseilles for British seamen to take them into custody, and that some Minorquins had been seized on board Catalan barks, of which a complaint was transmitted to this Court by the Spanish consul at Marseilles, from which city the following advices have been received, dated the 9th of February. Five frigates sailed from Toulon some days ago to cruise against the English, but were afterwards chased by three English men of war upon which they returned to Toulon again. There are 12 ships of the line at Toulon, none less than 64 guns; six of them are careened, the other six are not; it is thought they will be all ready for the sea in about a month's time. Forty-four battalions are ordered from Dauphiné and Languedoc into Provence, where it was thought they would be assembled in about six weeks' time, and a train of artillery is also preparing. The troops from Languedoc and Dauphiny are to be replaced by the Militia. These are all the warlike preparations making here. The behaviour of the five frigates here has much disgusted the populace.

Minorca—General Blakeney to Mr. Hoy.

[No. 36. P.]

10th February. Rec^d. 6th March.

I can't be too early in acquainting you, Sir, that by different informations sent me from France and Spain there is equal reason to believe the French intend very shortly to make an attack on this island ; 'tis publicly talked of at Marseilles and Barcelona, and founded on 25,000 men being immediately ordered to march to the sea coast of Provence, officers of all their Militia being ordered to join their corps in order to replace the regular troops drawn from the inland garrisons. Several large boats have been just built at Toulon to contain 60 men each, and a 24-pounder ; twelve sail of the line are absolutely to be ready to put to sea in this month, and five frigates that were lying in the road ready victualled are said to have received their orders.

In consequence of this intelligence I have thought it proper to call a Council of War to which I produced these informations, which were confirmed by a letter to the same purpose to Captain Hervey of his Majesty's ship *Phoenix*, the present commanding officer in this port, who has also assisted at the Council of War. And I think myself obliged, Sir, to mention Captain Hervey's great alertness and vigilance on this occasion, who has been particularly assisting to us with all the harmony and capacity his Majesty's service requires or we could wish for. The Council of War were all unanimously of opinion that considering who these informations came from, and the reports everywhere about which seemed to tally with them, that this island, with the greatest speed, be put in the best state of defence it can, and to know what dependence and assistance can be had

on and from the Minorquins. In consequence of this and other resolutions, the packet has been dispatched away with a lieutenant of the *Phoenix*, who has charge of the letters to the commodore, to desire his assistance at this time. The Captain of the packet has been suspended from this present service by the Council of War, on a complaint made to me by Captain Hervey of his neglect and dilatoriness on this very critical juncture, and which appeared but too evident to the Council of War, who were unanimous on his being, at least, not fit to be trusted on an affair of this great consequence.

I am applying myself to every measure I think for the safety and defence of the place, and shall not fail when I have a better opportunity of letting you know more particularly the steps I have taken to frustrate the designs of his Majesty's enemies, as I have nothing more at heart in this life than to discharge the trust reposed by his Majesty in me with as much alacrity as integrity.

[No. 22. B. 3.]

Recd. 7th March.

A great quantity of timber for buildings of ships is arrived at Toulon, especially from Holland, and the number of hands in the yard for building and equipping ships are doubled.

London.

[No. 50. Ad.]

8th March. Recd. 8th March.

The enclosed is an extract of a letter from Marseilles, which I think may be depended upon; and I send it for your satisfaction, as I think the French are not in such forwardness against Mahon as reports in the city have this day suggested. Other letters, of the same date, say the King has

contracted for 6,000 tons of shipping for transports at Marseilles, which must undoubtedly be some time in getting ready.

Enclosure.

Marseilles, 25th February.

The Toulon fleet is not sailed; the King is freighting some transports to join to it. We shall see, in time, if they can execute any serious design.

[No. 23. B. 3.]

Recd. 9th March.

The French King has engaged in his service a considerable number of Genoese sailors, who are to serve in the squadron equipping at Toulon.

Genoa—Consul Birtles.

[No. 136. P.]

21st February. Recd. 9th March.

A vessel arrived here in three days from Toulon: the master says that he left 5 French frigates in the road and ready to put to sea at the shortest warning, but three xebecks were not in such forwardness: he adds that they continue working incessantly on the large ships, but will require some time yet before they can be got ready.

Several letters from Marseilles and Toulon mention that an embarkation is to be made from the latter port, but do not pretend to decide positively if it is intended against the Island of Minorca. But it is generally believed to be for that expedition, and it is confirmed that the train of 24 pieces of heavy cannon, 12,000 cannon balls, 6,000 bomb shells, and a great quantity of other military stores, that I had the honour to mention in my last had been sent forward to Provence from Lyons,

are in this expedition. The French have drawn the regular troops out of Grenoble and Briançon, both which places have been garrisoned by Militia.

Two large xebecks, which have been lying here ever since the last war, have been bought up by orders from Marseilles, to be sent to that port to be fitted out for cruisers.

N.B.—Mr. Birtles' Letter, Number 40, to the Admiralty is to the same effect.

*Intelligence received between the 11th of March
and the 7th April 1756.*

[No. 24 B. 3.]

Recd. 13th March.

They begin to talk very positively of an expedition in the Mediterranean.

Hague.

[No. 22. A.]

12th March. Recd. 14th March.

The opinion of most people is that the French intend sending a considerable number of troops to Corsica with a large quantity of ammunition, and that they will afterwards endeavour to make themselves masters of Port Mahon which is represented as an easy enterprise: at least, they will endeavour to keep the English on their guard in the Mediterranean at Port Mahon and Gibraltar, in which time their troops in other parts will be continually kept in motion, and sometimes they will send out some transport ships as if they had a design to make a descent in England; by that means to keep the English on their guard at home and put them out of condition of sending all the forces to America, where the French will oppose all their strength, the Marine of France being sufficient to protect and cover their transports

necessary for America, and will endeavour to gain time as much as possible to increase their maritime force and enable them in two years to make a formidable appearance at sea.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 213. P.]

4th March. Recd. 15th March.

I will take up no more of your time at present than is necessary to accompany the enclosed relation.

Enclosure.

[No. 214. P.]

23rd February.

It is certain that a body of troops are going to Provence. The regiment of Soissonnois, which was at Montpellier, is arrived from thence and is actually cantoned at Cassis and Ciotat at 3 and 5 leagues off Marseilles on the sea coast. Two battalions out of twenty-two others, which also came from Languedoc, will arrive, the 26th, at Tarascon ; and the others will follow successively and will all be cantoned in Provence.

Three Genoese feluccas, of which two are now at Marseilles, arrived at Toulon, having on board 90 carpenters who are to work at the ships. Not that the Republic have furnished them, but the French Consul at Genoa has persuaded them to go by promising them three Genoese livres a day, which is 50 sol (French money), whereas the other have but 27.

It has been reported these three days that orders are come to take up fourteen western merchant ships of those that are in the harbour of Marseilles, and to send them to Toulon. The dispositions will soon show whether this report

has any foundation. If all these different preparations are made with an intent to intimidate our neighbours, they do not seem to mind them much.

Leghorn—Commodore Edgcumbe.

[No. 44. Ad.]

27th February. Recd. 15th March.

The French have draughted all their troops out of Briançon and Grenoble, and garrisoned those places with militia. Count D'Argenson, son to the Secretary of the same name, and Monsieur De Pauline are marched from Lyons with 24 battering cannon, twelve thousand cannon balls, six thousand shells, and a great quantity of other military stores, which, it is said, is intended to be embarked at Toulon, from whence they seem to meditate two embarkations. One is pretended to be designed for America, and the other, it is suspected, is intended against Minorca. Also people even think they have an eye to surprising Gibraltar with that force which is given to be preparing for America.

The five frigates which have been so long equipping at Toulon are now ready and in the road, but are not to go to sea till joined by a 60 and a 70 gun ship which are preparing with expedition, though their sailing then is uncertain. Twelve large ships are fitting and, it is thought, may be ready in all the next month, but I believe it is pretty certain they can't be sooner. Monsieur de la Galissonnière is named to command this squadron, and they are not to begin upon his own ship till he arrives. Great difficulties arise in procuring seamen, the town of Marseilles not having furnished half their proportion, which was fifteen hundred.

The French envoy and consul at Genoa had orders to engage for Toulon all the caulkers, carpenters, and seamen they could get ; they got about ninety caulkers and carpenters before it was discovered, when the Government put a stop to it, and an agent that was sent on the coast to raise seamen was ordered back.

It is said twenty-five thousand men are to form two camps in Provence, and to be commanded by the Dukes of Mirepoix and Richelieu.

The orders and counter orders that have been given from time to time about fitting out the Toulon fleet has been with a view to make the necessary preparations for carrying their plan into execution with more secrecy. I have not heard that any transports are yet taken up, and it is just now confirmed to me that the embarkations are intended, one without doubt for Minorca, the other uncertain, and that they cannot be ready sooner than the latter end of next month.

Cartagena—Consul Banks.

[No. 55. P.]

25th February. Rec^d. 17th March.

I have received advice from the South parts of France that the latter end of last month sailed from Toulon for the Levant 6 frigates of war, and that the grand fleet at Toulon, composed of all the King's ships and vessels fit to go to sea to the number of 26, was to sail the beginning of next month. That numbers of merchant vessels were taken into the Government's service, and several considerable bodies of troops in motion, one towards the sea coasts but more particularly the eastern parts, as also several other dispositions indicating an approaching embarkation or some other great enterprise, which advices I have

communicated to the Governors of Minorca and Gibraltar.

Here a French report prevails that the squadron aforesaid is sailed from Toulon with a number of men. Transports carrying 20,000 men to be landed in the Island of Minorca, and that 6 vessels fitted out by private people are sailed from Toulon and Marseilles to cruise against our Colours.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 95. P.]

28th February. Recd. 17th March.

The armament at Toulon is hastening with the greatest expedition. Intelligent people in that city have sent word that they think most of the large ships may be ready by the beginning of April. All cannot be so, for I have the fullest assurance from those who have been upon the spot that there is not cannon sufficient to equip those 12 ships of the line in the port of Toulon. There are 3 privateers and 2 xebecks now at Marseilles.

The French troops are to be quartered in the villages near the Mediterranean coast till the season will allow of their being encamped. There begins to be some preparations making at present for the fitting out a great number of transports. It is reported that a train of 30 pieces of large cannon is conveying towards Aix, and that the lesser artillery is carrying to the sea-shore to be ready for embarkation.

Barcelona—Consul Milner.

[No. 64. P.]

25th February. Recd. 17th March.

I take the liberty to transmit to your Excellency the enclosed list of the troops now marching out of Dauphiny and Languedoc in Provence.

(No. 65 contains the names of the 22 regiments of Infantry coming into the province, with the time of their intended arrival between the 15th and 16th March.)

Marseilles—3rd March.

[No. 45. Ad.]

3rd March. Recd. 17th March.

Since I wrote you last, everything in regard to the embarkation which seems to be intended, is getting ready with the utmost expedition ; as yet no more than 15 large ships have been agreed with, but the captains of more have been sent for, and their ships examined, and will in all likelihood be taken into the service. A great many (200 in all) tartans have been freighted in Languedoc to carry provisions, &c. The ovens are hard at work everywhere on the coast making of biscuit, of which, they say, 50,000 quintals are ordered to be got ready. Troops (expected) begin to arrive and all will be at their respective quarters within the time limited. The transports are to be at Toulon the 15th inst. ; the men of war are getting ready as fast as they can, but sailors are difficult to be had. Our port has been shut these few days past in order to get all the fishermen. It is reported that the Genoese are to furnish 1,500 or 2,000 seamen and that they arrive daily at Toulon.

M. de la Galissonnière passed by this city the first instant ; as he is arrived, without doubt they will prepare the two remaining ships. M. de Massilar is not yet come from Paris. It is constantly said here that 2 regiments have orders to be in readiness to embark for the Island of Corsica ; whether that be the real design I cannot say, but such is the report.

P.S. added to the above letter, dated London 26th March 1756 : This letter I have just received for you. I have had one of the 10th directed from my kinsman, who says that he believes it is very uncertain that the attempt is intended on that Island, notwithstanding the vast appearance of it.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 96. P.]

6th March. Recd. 20th March.

I have just heard that 11 ships are upon the point of sailing out of Toulon, 3 frigates of 24 guns, one of 30, one of 50, and 6 ships of the line carrying from 70 to 76 guns ; two other large ships are fitting out with great expedition, but the complement of sailors on board each is very defective, notwithstanding they have pressed old, superannuated men, and young useless boys.

The French troops, quartered near the Mediterranean sea shore, consist of 22 battalions, two of which are battalions of artillery. The report of an invasion on the Island of Minorca is very strong ; I have given notice of it to the captains of his Majesty's ships who have called at Villa Franca. The commanding officer at Port Mahon is by this time apprised of what is passing in the port of Toulon and the preparations that are said to be making for an embarkation.

(This is the letter, a copy of which was sent, the 20th March, to Admiral Byng at Portsmouth.)

Mr. Birtles.

[No. 137. P.]

6th March. Recd. 22nd March.

I have letters from Marseilles, of the 28th, which mention that by orders from the Admiralty 14 large ships, of upwards of 300 tons each, had

been freighted at 18 livres per ton for 3 months, and that they were careening and getting them in readiness for the sea with the utmost diligence possible, and by charter were to rendezvous at Toulon by the 10th instant. Those ships are to mount from 20 to 24 guns each. The same letters mention that an embargo had been laid upon all the small tartans on the coast of Provence and Languedoc, and was computed that about 160 sail are thus detained.

Letters from Toulon, of the 7th instant, mention that they were incessantly at work on the large ships ; that 5 new ships are put upon the stocks, and to expedite their getting ready a tartan had been despatched to Naples to fetch a number of shipwrights and carpenters from thence, as this Republic has put a stop to any others going from hence.

The letters from Toulon mention that 3 frigates of 24 guns each, one of 30 guns, one of 50, and 6 of 70 to 76 each, were gone into the road ; they were not completely manned, but would be in a few days, as sailors arrived from all ports of France for that purpose ; the other ships that were fitting would require some time before they would be ready for the sea. By the 16th instant, 22 battalions of troops were expected from the interior parts of the kingdom, which are to be cantoned in the villages near Toulon, and the Militia have orders to hold themselves in readiness to replace the regular troops at present in garrison at Toulon, and to other fortified places in Provence, &c. Circular letters are come to the officers of the Royal Regiment of Italians who had leave of absence, to rejoin their respective corps by the first of April.

The sale of the 2 xebecks, which I mentioned in my last, has not taken place, the Marseilles

merchants, who commissioned their purchase, not approving the price the owner insisted on for them.

Leghorn—Commodore Edgcumbe.

[No. 46. Ad.]

5th March. Recd. 22nd March.

Our latest advices from Toulon say that they are still working with great diligence to fit out their men of war, tho' all agree they cannot be ready with their whole squadron in all this month. The 25,000 men which are to assemble in Provence this month are to encamp near Marseilles, for which place, it is said, the 24 cannon for land batteries is on the road from Lyons. No transports are yet taken up, which makes some people conjecture they propose to embark their troops on board some of the men of war, who are to sail without their lower deck guns.

Leghorn—Consul Dick.

[No. 163. P.]

8th March. Recd. 22nd March.

I beg leave to trouble you with this, to acquaint you that yesterday I had advice from Toulon that the French are taking up there and at Marseilles 15,000 tons of shipping for transports, and also a hundred tartans or small vessels, all which are to be ready the 15th of this month, when 22 battalions are to be embarked under the command of the son of Marshal Maillebois; some people apprehend they are destined for Minorca, but my intelligence says for Corsica, of all which I have regularly acquainted Commodore Edgcumbe, who sailed from hence for Mahon last night.

The 16th of last month I received an order from General Blakeney (as per copy here enclosed) to provide him with 1,000 barrels of beef. As

there was none to be had, I immediately resolved to send into the country to buy the cattle, slaughter and salt them, which work has been continued night and day without interruption, and last night sailed with Mr. Edgcumbe a vessel which I had freighted for that purpose, with about 500 barrels ; and I hope to be able to dispatch the remainder in 4 days hence by the Mahon packet, which I desired Mr. Edgcumbe to leave with me for that purpose.

Leghorn—Commodore Edgcumbe.

[No. 48. Ad.]

7th March. Recd. 22nd March.

The advices I have received, of the 24th ultimo, say that at Toulon everything is getting ready with the greatest speed ; 14 large ships are taken up at Marseilles and more will be soon, they say, as far as 15,000 ton, to serve as transports. Those already taken are to be at Toulon the 15th of this month, against which time 22 battalions of foot will be in the neighbourhood, besides a battalion of the Royal Artillery, with some companies of miners and other workmen used in sieges, and a strong train of artillery with bombs are preparing.

Most people continue to think these preparations are against Minorca ; others that it is only a feint to draw some of our men of war into the Mediterranean to render any expedition they may intend nearer home more practicable, and some people are of opinion that these troops are intended to take possession of Corsica, upon which the French have long had an eye ; and the Genoese having recalled the Marquis Doria from the command of that Island, and relieved him only by a Colonel, makes it imagined the Republic tacitly consent to this measure, as one of the chief

nobility have always been appointed in that post. However, this is only conjecture. But it is very certain that these preparations are making, and the ships are getting ready as fast as they can; but men are wanting, tho' it is now positively said the Genoese are to furnish two thousand seamen. The two ships intended for Monsieur la Galissonnière and Monsieur de Massiac,¹ who are to command the squadron, are not yet hove down; they wait the arrival of these gentlemen.

The transports taken up are not allowed to take French sailors, but hire foreigners, to which they pay from 30 to 36 livres a month, and the freight paid those ships 18 livres per ton a month.

It is said orders are given for fitting out eight ships of the line more at Toulon, but as my correspondent is not informed of it from the spot, [he] does not believe it, and adds that he looks upon it as a thing next to impossible, at least for some time; guns and other necessaries as well as men being wanting.

By the information of a vessel just arrived from Gibraltar, I have reason to believe that the Chesterfield and Fortune sloops are with the convoy at Mahon, for which port I am on the point of sailing with the victuallers for the garrison and shall convoy all the trade bound to the eastward as far as Minorca.

Leghorn—Consul Dick.

[No. 51. Ad.]

8th March. Rec^d. 22nd March.

I had the honour to write to you, on the 4th instant, and have now that of forwarding one

¹ M. de Massiac was the commandant of the port of Toulon: he was not appointed to a command in the squadron.

from Commodore Edgcumbe, who sailed last night and took with him the vessel I had freighted to carry the beef to Mahon ; she had on board about 500 barrels, and the remainder goes by the packet in a few days hence.

I have regularly acquainted Mr. Edgcumbe with the advices I have had from Toulon. They are to have ready by the 15th of this month 15,000 tons of shipping besides 100 tartans for transports, on board of which twenty-two battalions are to embark under the command of Marshal Maillebois : some people say they are design'd for Mahon, but my intelligence says for Corsica.

[No. 22. D.]

Recd. 22nd March.

The Toulon fleet is fitting for the sea with the utmost expedition : six ships of the line are already gone into the road, six more and five frigates will soon be ready to follow them. Fourteen battalions and a large train of artillery are ready to be embarked, and a large number of troops are daily expected. It is said the force is intended against Minorca and is to be commanded by the Count de Maillebois ; five battalions are to be sent to Corsica to assist in the defence of that island, in case the English should think of making any attempt on it.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 215. D.]

13th March. Recd. 22nd March.

I have received the enclosed accounts and all the letters that are lately come hither from Provence, Languedoc, and Lyons mention an attempt on Minorca as intended and resolved upon by the Court of France, and to be executed as

soon as the battalions now in full march towards the coast of Provence are arrived, and the squadron together with the transports can be got in readiness, which probably will require some weeks longer.

[No. 216. P.]

The whole Marine at Marseilles is in motion ; besides the western ships that were in that harbour, which have been taken into the King's service, above twenty others of the burden of 2,000 quintals or thereabouts have been taken up, and they are allowed 18 livres per ton a month. They have staccadoed the harbour's mouth at Marseilles to prevent the fishermen from going out. They take all they can get, either French or foreigners ; these last make use of the opportunity and insist upon 30 or 40 livres per month.

They expect from Arles three lighters loaded with cannon, and they have landed and placed in the park a quantity of bombs which, with those that were there before, amount to upwards of 8,000. Two of the twenty-two battalions, expected from Languedoc, were to arrive yesterday at Aix.

These dispositions, and those carried on in Spain with a still greater activity, don't leave much room to doubt but that the two Courts have Mahon and Gibraltar in view. In these circumstances it will be very difficult for the English to prevent their being taken, particularly Mahon, which is not strong on the land side, and where they cannot send an army capable of preventing an invasion.

[No. 217. P.]

All imaginable methods are taken to procure sailors for manning the ships as well as the transports. They take all those they can find in public-houses in the night time.

The persons that have undertaken to case 600 barrels of powder have engaged to do it by the 25th instant. Those barrels have even already been carried from the storehouses of the citadel of Saint Nicholas to the old infirmaries, which are near it, where they are to be cased, and from whence they will be shipped privately.

They bake great quantities of biscuit for the King's account. Monsieur Galissonnière, who is to take upon him the command of the fleet, arrived some days ago at Toulon where seven ships are already in the road along with the five frigates. If the French should lose this squadron it would be absolutely impossible to fit out another at Toulon.

Besides the twenty-two battalions drawn out of Languedoc a battalion of artillery is expected, and by the quantity of bombs that are carrying to Marseilles, and of which there will be at least 600 when the whole shall be arrived, it seems they are resolved not to spare them or to inspire great terror.

The report that great armaments were making in Spain is contradicted by letters from Valentia, Cartagena, and by the masters of ships lately arrived from Barcelona. There are lately arrived at Cadiz three French ships from the American Islands and a fourth at Malaga, without having met with any English. Nor do we hear of any prizes, which gives room to think that they are gone to Mahon to profit and settle their affairs, which may take a serious turn if matters are not made up by negotiations; but it is [not] impossible that under a pretence of making an attempt upon Mahon the French may send a body of troops to Corsica to take possession of that island and be nearer Italy.

[No. 27. B. 3.]

Recd. 23rd March.

Count Maillebois set out on the 13th for Toulon, and the Duc de Richelieu will follow some days after to take upon him the command all along the coasts of the Mediterranean. Four ships of the line and three frigates in the road of Toulon have all their people on board, and the rest of the armament is pursued with great dispatch.

[No. 28. B. 3.]

Recd. 26th March.

Marshal Richelieu set out, on the 18th, for Toulon and will be there on the twenty-fifth ; the Duc de Fronsac, his son, and the Count d'Egmont, his son-in-law, who are to be his aide-de-camps, set out the day before. The Marquises de Maillebois and du Mesnil, Lieutenant Generals, and their five Major Generals, are to be under his command, and the Chevalier de Raimond is appointed Quarter Master General of his army.

It is assured that Monsieur de Richelieu, upon his arrival at Toulon, will find 80 pieces of cannon, 4,000 bombs, and 28 battalions, either all embarked or upon the point of being so, and the whole fleet will sail immediately for Minorca, and besiege Port Mahon.

[No. 30. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd April.

They work without intermission at Toulon on the equipments. 8 ships of the line are already in the road and four others will follow immediately. Sailors are expected to complete the complements, who arrive from all quarters and are distributed on board as they come. Six other ships of the line are fitting out without reckoning the frigates, fire ships, and bomb ketches which are ready. The troops, stores, and bombs are embarked as the ships are ready to go into the road.

At Dunkirk, they say, they will soon have great

news from the Mediterranean, and that they will take the advantage of the consternation that the news of the siege of Port Mahon will give to invade England ; they are resolved on war, and all the French King desires from other Powers is an exact neutrality, that their first endeavour should be an expedition of consequence in the Mediterranean, and sending reinforcements to America sufficient to prevent the English undertaking anything there.

Bern—Mr. Villettes.

[No. 218. P.]

18th March. Recd. 2nd April.

I have this minute received enclosed accounts. I would not take upon me to detain them, tho' they consist in little more than the conjectures which it would be both imprudent and unsafe to rely on as to Mahon.

[No. 219. P.]

Besides the 15 large transport ships that have been taken into the King's service, they have taken up five others, so that there are 20 in all. Orders are come to bake 30,000 weight of biscuit. Besides the 12 ships and 5 frigates, of which the future squadron is to be composed, orders are come from Court to fit out 4 galleys, the 4 xebecks, and all the other ships fit for use, of which they reckon 7 or 8, for which purpose they have bought timber wherever they could meet with any.

The day before yesterday a proclamation was published to oblige all masters of merchant ships, captains, clerks, and cadets to appear to serve on board the King's ships.

Notwithstanding all these orders and the seeming preparations for the transportation of troops for their landing and for a siege, those that

watch things closely are of opinion that the whole is but a feint, to oblige the English to send troops and a strong squadron into the Mediterranean and leave their own coasts exposed. It cannot be conceived that 20 ships can be sufficient for transporting any considerable number of troops with a train of artillery and the necessary provisions and ammunition required for a siege.

[No. 220. P.]

It is given out that three of the frigates have sailed from Toulon the night before last ; but the same thing having been said over and over, it is probable they may be only gone into the great road and we must wait for a confirmation of this news.

The notions of a project for invading Mahon begins to lose credit. All this noisy march of troops will end in a camp to be formed this summer in the neighbourhood of Marseilles ; and the armament of Toulon seems rather intended for an expedition to Canada than Minorca, if they can deceive the vigilance of the English in the Mediterranean or the Ocean to send a convoy thither. The 20 ships taken into the King's service at Marseilles are all Maloese, perfectly acquainted with the seas of North America. They would not take any of those of Provence, altho' they were offered them, because they know little of those seas, and besides their ships are not of the same strength as those of St. Malo.

Genoa—Mr. Birtles.

[No. 138. P.]

10th March. Recd. 2nd April.

This morning the French Courier arrived, and some passengers who came with him assured me that the greatest preparations are making at

Marseilles, Toulon, and on all the coast of Provence, for an embarkation that ever was known. The French don't make the least secret of their design, and publicly talk of making of a descent on the Island of Minorca. I acquainted you in my last that an embargo had been laid on about 160 tartans and that 14 large ships have been freighted at Marseilles; they have since increased the number of the latter to 19, which are to carry each 20 guns and upwards of 250 men. The troops intended for the expedition would arrive the 19th instant at Toulon, but, it is conjectured, would not embark until the beginning of April. They have begun to draw the regular troops out of the fortified places on the coast, and the Castle of Antibes is garrisoned at present by Militia. In my last I had the honour to acquaint you that six ships of the line and four frigates lay ready in the road of Toulon; they have been reinforced since by two other ships of the line; and the master of a vessel, just arrived, says the ships have been joined by four galleys and three xebecks from Marseilles. Letters of the sixth instant from Marseilles mention that 25,000 of wheat was come thither from Languedoc designed for the subsistence of the troops, which had occasioned the prices of wheat to fall.

Genoa—Mr. Birtles.

[No. 139. P.]

13th March. Recd. 2nd April.

The letters of the 6th instant, from Marseilles, mention M. de la Galissonnière's arrival at Toulon, who is to command the fleet that is fitting out there. His presence has added vigour to their preparations, which they are pushing on with

the greatest diligence possible. I have seen some advices which confirm that, besides the intended design to make a descent on the Island of Minorca, they will certainly make an embarkation of troops for America ; the preparations making are very great, and large quantities of biscuit was baking for the subsistence of those troops designed for the embarkation.

The want of mariners are so great that they force any foreigners into their service and give as [much as] 40 livres per month to able seamen.

The same letters mention that advices had been received, at Toulon, of Admiral Moyston's¹ arrival at Mahon with ten sail of his Majesty's ships.

The French envoy here, Monsieur de Neuilly, has found means to engage about 30 more caulkers and shipwrights, which he sent away to remote places on the coast, and this morning despatched a felucca to take them abroad to carry them to Toulon.

Leghorn—Mr. Consul Dick.

[No. 165. P.]

15th March. Recd. 2nd April.

I had the honour to write to you the 8th instant, and beg leave to trouble you with this, to acquaint you that my last advices from Toulon are dated the 6th of this month, when nothing had sailed. There was then ready six frigates and fourteen ships of war, and they were fitting out four galleys, two xebecks, one fire-ship, and

¹ There was no Admiral Moyston in the English navy, and no 10 sail arriving at Minorca. Rear-Admiral Mostyn, whose name looks as if he was the man intended, was at this date in N. America.

bomb ketch, and were daily expecting fourteen large merchant ships from Marseilles, where were embarked a great quantity of bombs and ammunition. At Arles they were embarking a thousand live oxen, with a quantity of hay, oats, flour, &c. The troops destined for this expedition are twenty-five battalions, eight hundred matrosses, one company of miners and one company of pioneers, of all which I have advised both General Blakeney and Commodore Edgcumbe by the packet which I have despatched this day.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 97. P.]

13th March. Recd. 2nd April.

At Marseilles forty transport ships are already hired for the embarkation of the French troops, and more are ordered to be got ready. Marshal Richelieu, the Duke of Mirepoix, with other General officers, are ordered at Provence. Above a thousand sailors have been already furnished from Genoa for manning the fleet of Toulon. Notwithstanding the fleet at Toulon is so ill-furnished with mariners, a great number of sailors have lately been sent by land to Rochefort and Brest.

Commodore Edgcumbe has just sent me word from Leghorn that he is going to convoy a ship loaded with a quantity of salt beef for the use of the garrison at Port Mahon, which the Governor had demanded to enable him the better to stand out a siege.

[No. 16. C.]

Recd. 2nd April.

The Marshal de Richelieu and the Generals have followed the officers of the regiments

to be employed against Minorca. The train of heavy artillery, mortars, bombs, cannoneers, miners, &c., that have orders to embark can have no other destination; and since the French Court have been informed that England intends sending a squadron to the Mediterranean, courier after courier hath been sent to press the equipping of the fleet and transports, and for preparing everything necessary for embarking the troops in order that their troops may sail, arrive, and land, before the English squadron can get to the island.

Hague.

[No. 23. A.]

Recd. 2nd April.

Advices from France confirm the embarkation from Toulon for Minorca, which it was reported Marshal Richelieu would command in person, but these advices make no mention of the precise time when the embarkation would be ready to sail, nor what men of war are to convoy it and cover the descent.

[No. 24. A.]

Recd. 2nd April.

The French boast much of their attempt on the Island of Minorca, but it is believed they are not near so ready for executing it at Toulon as they would have people believe.

[No. 31. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd April.

It is doubted whether Marshal Richelieu found the dispositions at Toulon advanced enough to be embarked yet on the expedition against Minorca: the troops are said to amount to 16,000 men, with twelve ships of the line and 6 frigates.

Contains a state of the intelligence of the French armaments by land and sea on this side the Straits of Gibraltar, received between the end of December 1755 and 6th of April 1756.

[Brit. Mus. Addl. MS. 31959, f. 118a, *et. seq.*]

[B. 3.]

Recd. 3rd January.

They write from Rochefort that the Prudent and the three frigates continue in the road of the Isle of Aix.

The Amaranthe from New Orleans, arrived at Brest on the 12th December.

M. Périér's squadron are beginning to get out into the road of Brest.

It is given out that 80,000 men from the inland parts of France are to march to the coasts and be quartered by brigades from Dunkirk to Senlis.

The preparations are continued at Douai, but there are no dispositions yet made in the ports for an embarkation.

List of the French troops quartered from Metz to Dunkirk.

N.B.—Some alteration will be made in their cantonments, as several corps are to advance towards the coasts.

		Battalions.			Squadrons.
Metz	.	14	.	.	4
Saarlouis	.	4	.	.	—
Thionville	.	5	.	.	—
Longuion	.	3	.	.	—
Montmedy	.	1	.	.	—
Donchéry	.	—	.	.	2

Sedan . . .	4 . .	2
Mézières . .	2 . .	—
Charleville . .	1 . .	—
Rocroi . . .	2 . .	—
Givet . . .	5 . .	2
Philippeville . .	2 . .	—
Quesnoy . . .	2 . .	2
Landrecies . .	2 . .	2
Avennes . . .	2 . .	2
Maubeuge . . .	4 . .	2
Valenciennes . .	7 . .	2
Bouchain . . .	1 . .	2
Cambrai . . .	5 . .	2
Arras . . .	5 . .	2
Douai . . .	9 . .	2
Condé . . .	2 . .	—
Lille . . .	8 . .	2
Bergues St. Winoc .	4 . .	—
Dunkirk . . .	8 . .	—
Gravelines . . .	2 . .	—
Calais . . .	5 . .	—
Boulogne . . .	4 . .	—
St. Omer . . .	3 . .	—
Aire . . .	2 . .	—
—		—
118		28 (<i>sic</i>)

[B. 3.]

Recd. 3rd January.

They write from Brest that the *Courageux*, *Amphion*, with other ships of the line—names not known—and the *Thétis* and *Émeraude*, frigates, are in the road, waiting for the *Prudent* and three frigates from Rochefort; after they shall have joined, it is said, M. Périer will sail very speedily, but nothing transpires concerning their destination.

The same letters add that there are continual

storms, by which the vessels in the road have suffered very much.

[No. 3. B. 3.]

Recd. 3rd January 1756.

The Mutine, frigate, from Quebec, arrived at Rochefort on the 12th December.

The Fidèle arrived at the Isle of Aix on the 11th December from Quebec.

The Little Squadron of Rochefort was to have sailed the 20th December to join that of Mons. de Périer at Brest.

It is confidently said that 18 out of the 41 ships in the port of Boulogne are fitting, which, together with orders concerning the privateers, show that they have something in view.

The report on armament being preparing at St. Valery is false.

[No. 2. B. 3.]

Recd. 6th January 1756.

The little Squadron from Rochefort was arrived at Brest on the 22nd December.

Mr. Jos. Cokburne.

[No. 29. Ad.]

3rd January. Recd. 6th January.

Went into Brest water in the Hunter cutter on the 3rd January 1756, at 4 o'clock in the morning, and rowed round the ships of war, there being nine, five of which were very large (of 70 guns and upwards), two of about 50 guns and 2 frigates; also six merchant ships and two large Dutch fly boats.

Hague.

[No. 14. A.]

2nd January. Recd. 6th January.

It is thought that France will undertake early this year a descent in England or else an

expedition against Hanover. It is assured they are getting ready a number of flat-bottomed boats.

[No. 5. B. 3.]

Recd. 12th January 1756.

There are three of the French King's builders at L'Orient who were employed upon 4 men of war, 3 frigates, and 3 pinks after a new method, which ten ships will be fit for the sea in 8 months.

They are building 6 frigates at Nantes.

The Toulon fleet will not be ready before February.

M. Périer's squadron was in the Road of Brest on the 25th December.

The ships are arrived there from Rochefort. They imagine that the fleet may put to sea about the 15th instant.

At Brest they are to fit out the Tonnant for M. Du Bois de la Motte, with two other ships of the line.

Orders are sent to Paris from several parts of France for raising sailors, as well the registered ones as others. The last levy amounted to 20,300 men and this, it is thought, will not be short of 35,000.

Marshal Belleisle will have the command upon those of the Ocean. Each of them will be attended by General Officers, who will reconnoitre and give immediate advices to their respective principals.

[No. 6. B. 3.]

Recd. 13th January.

They continue to think that M. Périer will sail this month if the ships from Rochefort can join him.

Orders have been received at Brest to fit out the Tonnant and Défenseur to make part of M. de

Conflans's squadron. The Captains of the *Licorne*, *Concorde*, *Sauvage*, *Sirène*, *Mutine*, and *Galatée* frigates, which are to sail with Mons. de Conflans, are already named. The *Thétis* and *Héroïne* are at the Isle of Aix and the *Blonde* and *Brune* dare not stir out of the harbour. A promotion is daily expected at Brest. It is thought that the French have 24 new ships of one kind or the other upon the stocks, which will be finished by the middle of June; some frigates are also building at St. Malo and other places, and they will neglect nothing to render their Marine formidable, but it is to be questioned whether any strong squadron will sail out of their ports before spring.

[No. 19.]

Recd. 21st January.

Mons. de Belleisle is appointed Commander-in-Chief along the coast from Bayonne to Dunkirk; the Duc de Harcourt in Normandy, Mons. de Cremille, and under him General Lally in the Boullonnais, Prince de Soubise and Mons. St. Germain in Flanders, Mons. du Barailh at Dunkirk.

There is a report that something is to be attempted against Halifax early next spring. The particulars are not yet known.

[No. 8. C.]

Recd. 21st January.

The moderation of the King of France is at an end, and is followed by all the passion and resentment that disappointment can inspire. The French Ministers till lately have been persuaded our Court would make more acceptable offers to avoid a war, and they have been confirmed in this opinion by all the advices they received from their friends in London. At last their eyes are opened and war must certainly ensue if the French King's last demands are not complied with by our Court.

Since a Council that was lately held at the French Court, all Paris talk of an invasion that is to be headed by the Young Pretender. This has been talked of in the best company, and opportunities have been sought of talking with those persons who are most capable to form a true judgment on such an attempt, and they agree it must be attended with insuperable difficulties, whilst we have such an army in England; the embarkation of such a great number of troops in any port being very difficult if not impossible, and if vessels could be got together, they are agreed it would be sacrificing so many men to send them without a sufficient convoy, which it is impossible to have if our fleets are vigilant.

As to sending of a few ships from different ports everybody feels it's throwing them away, provided they should escape our ships of war, and the French conclude the great preparations that will be made for an invasion are intended to alarm the nation, distress our credit, and prevent our transports being sent abroad.

[No. 9. C.]

Recd. 31st January.

The French have taken resolution of sending a body of troops to Canada as soon as the season permits, but it is not certain where they will be embarked, tho' it's believed at Brest.

[No. 8. B. 3.]

Recd. 1st February 1756.

There is no account of the ships from Rochefort having joined those in Brest. A great convoy of provisions and ammunition set out the latter end of December from Arras for Calais, and another is preparing at Douai to go to the same place.

At Havre de Grâce they are building 2 ships of 50 guns and two frigates of 30, besides two that

are finished. At L'Orient they have two ships of 74 guns and 2 of 64 upon the stocks, besides two frigates of 30.

All the intendants in France have received orders to assemble the whole Militia of their generalities ; one part of which they say will be sent to the sea coasts, and [the] other to replace the troops which have left the garrisons and are marching towards the sea coast.

The French King gives 24,000 livres to the major-generals who are to act under the Marshals Belleisle and Richelieu. Things continue in the same station at Dunkirk ; 300 waggons loaded with ammunition, etc., are on the road from Douay to Calais.

Marshal Belleisle is expected at Dunkirk, and then it is believed a great many troops will march towards the coast. His army from thence to Bayonne will consist of 135 battalions. They say the Prince of Soubise, who is to command under the Marshal, will be at Dunkirk before him.

[No. 9. B. 3.]

Recd. 1st February.

An embarkation is talked of in a very vague manner.

Mons. Périer's fleet continues in the Road of Brest. He has, as yet, neither got his instructions nor the ships from Rochefort.

Mons. Périer, it is confirmed, is to carry M. Lambert with him ; and if this should be so, the fleet will sail to St. Domingo, since M. Lambert is to relieve M. de Lance, the Governor there.

The Outarde, with cannon on board, is expected at Brest.

Several loaded horses and waggons arrived at Brest lately with the clothing for the soldiers that are to embark there, as it is believed. Messieurs

de Bauffremont and De Constane will have distinct commands ; one for guarding the coasts of France, the other for the protection of the colonies. The French troops in all parts are in motion towards the sea coasts. At Paris they talk of a fresh embarkation for Canada ; and if no accommodation is made by March next, they will set about the port of Dunkirk in good earnest. This year the French assign 20 millions of livres for their marine ; last year it cost them 13 only.

Seven French battalions are upon their march to the following places :

One of Rohan and Conti and Eu for Dunkirk.

One of Tour du Pin and Belsunze (*sic*) for Calais.

Two of Auvergne for Normandy.

It's believed, however, that hitherto they have had nothing in view but an affected parade of marches and counter-marches.

[No. 15. A.]

20th January. Rec^d. 1st February.

It's said that as soon as Mons. de Belleisle was named to command from Dunkirk to Bayonne, he proposed to his Most Christian Majesty the assembling a very formidable body of troops in those parts, the conduct of which he himself offered to undertake. It is also said that Mons. d'Argenson was his chief supporter in the Council ; that Mons. Seychelles pretended to be so at first, but afterwards violently opposed it, because he is for a Continent war. The plan of the Marshal's is said to advise the French King not to attack any of the Powers on the Continent as yet, and particularly to leave Hanover quiet ; but at the same time to assemble three very large armies upon the frontiers of Alsace, Flanders, and Languedoc, which will serve to keep all the Powers in

Europe in check and suspense. This once done an invasion in Great Britain or Ireland, if not in both, must be seriously attempted. For that purpose as many vessels must be assembled in the different parts as can be got together, with everything necessary for an embarkation.

The French King is by this plan advised not to send out any large squadrons of men-of-war, but only some light cruisers to cover the arrival and going out of their transports and to give notice of the English motions, and to carry supplies to their colonies; and that it will be, however, necessary, at the same time, to have a very large fleet ready at Brest to give umbrage to the English, and serve as occasion shall require. The Marshal flatters himself that by these means one or more descents may be made with success; and it is reported he has named the places where the descents should be made.

This plan is not to everybody's taste; but, notwithstanding, it appears as if some part of it was already adopted, by the motions of the French towards the frontiers on all sides and particularly to the sea coasts on the Ocean, where Marshal Belleisle and Prince de Soubise are upon the point of beginning their circuit. They are daily expected at Dunkirk, from whence they are to proceed further on their progress.

[No. 7. B. 3.]

Recd. 1st February.

Mons. Périer's squadron continues in the Road of Brest, and the ships from Rochefort have not joined him. Mons. de Bauffremont will command part of M^r. de Conflans's squadron and 'tis imagined he is to cruise upon the coasts. That squadron is getting ready with more than ordinary dispatch. They will soon have 16 frigates

in order for cruisers. As the East India Company fits out no ships this year, the builders are gone from L'Orient to Brest for employment. The first of the new basins at Brest is finished, the second will soon be so, but not the third. Marshal Richelieu has absolutely got the command upon the coasts of the Mediterranean. Marshal Belleisle will set out very soon to take his command upon him. In a month there will be 100,000 men upon the coasts of France, which are not enough to cover them from a descent, but sufficient to intimidate the English. The Marquis du Mesnil is named to conduct an expedition by sea. Nothing new at Dunkirk, where the war is looked upon as inevitable. They give 100 livres to every sailor not registered that will go to Brest. There are actually at Dunkirk 104 vessels of different sizes, 20 of which belong to the Dutch and other people, and 40 not rigged, and 4 are set apart for privateers. They have undertaken to build four frigates, but there must be time for it. The galley slaves that are arrived in the neighbourhood of Paris have had orders to return back again.

[No. 11. B. 3.]

Recd. 1st February.

Couriers have been sent from Paris to all the French ports, with orders to carry on their preparations with double diligence. A messenger lately arrived at Versailles from Brest with the advice of the taking possession of Saint Lucia. They were assembling all the sailors they could possibly get at Brest, and Mons. Périer remained in the road on the 17th January. Besides the invasion of England, the French talk of an army, under the Prince of Conti, for the Low Countries and Holland.

[No. 31. Ad.]

20th January. Recd. 3rd February.

State of the armaments at that time in the several ports of France, of which this is the abstract.

AT BREST.

		Line.	Frigates.
Ships of 80 guns	2		
„ 74 „	1		
„ 70 „	2	11	13
„ 64 „	3		
„ 50 „	3		
Frigates 34 to 24 guns	13		
	—		
	24		

AT ROCHEFORT.

Ships of 74 guns	2		
„ 70 „	1		
„ 64 „	3	6	7
Frigates 30 guns	7		
	—		
	13		

AT HAVRE.

Frigates 32 guns	2		2
	—		
Total	39	17	22

Those at Toulon were 12 of the line and 6 frigates, abstracted in No. 7.

[No. 12. B. 3.]

Recd. 3rd February.

The *Anémone* returned to Brest from Cayenne and Saint Domingo, and brought word that the French had taken possession of the neutral island of Saint Lucia with the troops from Martinico.

Great levies of seamen are made at Brest, and the cruisers come there from different parts of the coast to exercise with the great guns. Mons. Périer still continues in that road; they think that some new embarkation is meditating for America. Orders are arrived at Brest to hasten their preparation, which may be over by the 4th of March; there are likewise orders for sending all the ships to Brest as soon as they are fitted out respectively.

The Prudent and three frigates continue at the Isle of Aix; it is affirmed that they will sail directly to Martinico on some expedition upon the neutral isles. The French King takes 12 ships belonging to the East Indies Company for transporting his troops. The garrison at Dunkirk is soon to be reinforced, and the Prince of Soubise is daily expected there.

[No. 14. B. 3.]

Recd. 6th February.

There is neither armament nor embarkation ordered as yet, but warlike preparations and motions of troops continue.

A few days ago 8 bilanders were loaded with artillery at Lille for Calais. Vast projects on the part of France are talked of, which are to appear all at once, but what they are is still unknown.

[No. 10. C.]

Recd. 7th February.

Soon after the arrival of the answer to the project de requisition in France, two Councils were held there, and the resolution was taken to put in execution the measures before concerted. Orders were thereupon sent to the King's ships, as well as to the seaports, to take all the British vessels, and letters-of-marque will be delivered to all the privateers.

A great train of artillery, with everything belonging to it, is prepared. Mortars, bombs, whatever is requisite in forming sieges ; all that is wanting to throw up entrenchments and to fortify a camp is on the road to Normandy and Brittany. A prodigious number of waggons from all parts is employed in the service, and more troops are ordered from Alsace towards the coast, so that everything now conspires to make it believed that an invasion will be attempted, and that the navy and part of the army will be risked to revenge the indignity offered to the Crown. It appears the more probable now as it is the only way left to France, if the news of the Treaty at London between England and the King of Prussia proves true in all points.

Havre de Grâce and Brest, it is said, are the ports where the troops are to assemble and to embark. In the former they have prepared a vast number of flat-bottomed boats with heavy cannon ; and they pretend by their numbers and the superiority of their fire to transport the troops in safety, though they should meet the English fleet.

Various are the sentiments on that affair and many the objections made by those who have served long at sea. However, from some particular circumstances it may be concluded that the French Ministry is determined to execute the plan of invasion that has been presented to them. The remounting the cavalry and putting them in a condition to serve is suspended ; the invasion takes up the attention of the Ministry which, it is said, must be attempted, though they were sure to lose all the troops and vessels sent on the expedition.

Letters have been certainly sent to the Pretender, who has been consulted on the affair. His

son will appear at the head of it. He has been at Versailles some time and has seen the King as well as his ministers. His partisans say he will be joined by numbers on his landing.

It has been proposed to embark troops on the coast of Provence to attack Port Mahon ; and, by the person it comes from, it may be true.

It has been resolved to send at least 6,000 men to Canada very early in the year.

[No. 16. A.] Hague : 6th February. Recd. 9th February.

It is most certain that the designs of France are to alarm England with invasions, though they should not be able to effectuate them, and the advices received from all sides of the excessive preparations of all kinds on the coasts prove that their intention is to attempt them.

[No. 17. A.] Hague : 6th February. Recd. 9th February.

Several people believe that the French will make a show of a descent in England to make the English more watchful on their own coasts, whilst the French transport their troops from Normandy and Picardy to America. Others imagine that the descent will actually be made.

[No. 18. A.] 6th February. Recd. 9th February.

Several regiments are marching to Normandy and Brittany ; others are filing off from the interior of France. There are to be 40 battalions along the coasts, and all the fortified places are supplied with ammunition and provisions.

Dover—Mr. Barham.

[No. 319. P.] 10th February. Recd. 11th February.

Very little transpires by my last accounts from the other side than the great warlike preparations which they are daily making, and the surprising

quantity of powder that has, within these few days, been brought into Calais by the way of their canals in 30 flat-bottomed vessels, and much more, it is said, is coming.

[No. 15. B. 3.]

Recd. 9th February.

Nothing new at Brest. Mons. Périer continues in the Road and the preparations go on slowly. It is said that 2,000 men for embarkation are to go there, but of that there is no certainty.

Advices.

[No. 16. B. 3.]

Recd. 13th February 1756.

Mons. Périer has received his sailing orders and it was imagined he would sail from Brest on the 1st instant. There are 5 English men-of-war cruising off that port, which give the people there some uneasiness; they have already taken 4 merchant ships that were bound for that port, where twenty vessels loaded with flour and wine arrived lately. They take there all possible precautions, as if they were apprehensive of a descent.

Mons. De Conflans—whose squadron is fitting out, which, it is said, is to consist of 11 ships and 7 frigates—is to go to Canada with the land forces, which are to amount to 6,000 men. Some people believe that Mons. Périer is gone to Martinico, but others are of opinion that he goes only on a cruise and to convoy the merchant ships. A private letter mentions that M. Périer sailed from Brest, the 2nd instant, in the morning, but it don't appear that there is any certain advice of it. Marshal Belleisle, Prince Soubise, and the Intendant of Dunkirk are daily expected at that place. They continue sending away warlike stores from Lisle and Douai towards the sea coast.

Hague.

[No. 19. A.]

10th February. Recd. 14th February.

It is said the Court of France has, in most part, approved Marshall Belleisle's plan, and that he himself is charged with the execution and is daily expected at Dunkirk. It is further said, he proposes to assemble 100,000 men upon the coast from Cherbourg to Dunkirk; the rest of the French troops to cover the frontiers. By this disposition, he supposes, he shall give equal uneasiness to the southern and western parts of England, and oblige the English to separate their force. It is also reported that to facilitate this operation, he purposes orders should be given (and it is pretended they are already sent) for equipping 12 sail of the line and 12 frigates more at Brest, the plans for disembarking to be settled as opportunity shall serve; the intention, as is said, is to prepare three attacks, two of which to be feints, but the real one to be in the West of England.

The Marshal demands for this purpose 600 sail of transports, each ship to carry 100 men, and that he intends to employ the smugglers of Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire for his pilots as the most knowing for his purpose. As many persons are said to object to the difficulties there would be in executing this plan, the Marshal has presented many memorials to explain his design, and says the scheme may be very feasible in a fresh southerly wind, a dark night, a fog, or a stark calm, because in any of these cases the fleets of England could not come to intercept their passage. It is further reported that this project is to be seconded with an embarkation upon the coast of Provence, where 30,000 men are ordered to assemble and to make

an attempt upon the island of Minorca, which is apprehended as no very difficult undertaking.

[No. 20. A.]

10th February. Recd. 14th February.

Several plans are given into the Court of France about the enterprises of landing in England. They have determined that it is very practicable, notwithstanding the formidable fleet which the English have. These plans are examined with great care and preserved. There are likewise projects for transporting as many troops as possible into America in order to get a superiority over the English there ; and to do this with more success, they propose at the same time to set out a great number of privateers to do all the mischief possible to the English merchant ships, and thus to occasion such a division of the English fleet as that the French men-of-war may, with more security, appear at sea. Meantime the troops are in motion and march to the coasts, and they work in the ports with equal diligence, particularly at Brest where there are some ships already equipped.

Advices.

[No. 17. B. 3.]

Recd. 20th February.

There has been no news received for some time past from the ports of France ; it is thought, however, that M. Périer has sailed and they are not without some uneasiness on his account, as an English squadron has been seen on the coasts of France.

The French troops begin to move towards the seaside. They still talk of forming a camp soon about Gravelines and that neighbourhood. Some French troops with a large train of artillery are on their march for the conquered countries of Brittany.

[No. 11. C.]

Recd. 24th February.

By the several measures taken, it may safely be affirmed that the French Ministry have resolved to execute the plan that was presented them for invading Great Britain and Ireland. They are very sensible of the danger and difficulty attending such an attempt; but as the Treaty with Prussia has left them no other way of showing their resentment, they will undertake, though they should lose all the troops employed in it. They would sacrifice one half of the kingdom to be revenged on England, and great care is taken to inspire people with the same spirit.

Few of the officers and engineers of experience that are nominated to be of the expedition like it; but, for encouragement to them and the soldiers, it is given out by the Ministry that, by the precautions taken, they are sure of landing safe, and that by this stroke they shall destroy their rival.

The preparations making both for offence and defence are immense, particularly palisades, *chevaux de frise*, and a prodigious train of artillery. It has been said by a person in power that if they land their whole force, they will march directly to London; but some engineers are of opinion they intend to secure Portsmouth, and [this] seems confirmed by the battering train, mortars, and bombs they carry with them. Great precautions are taken to prevent any intelligence coming from the French ports of what is doing there, and still greater will be taken in the places from whence the troops will embark, so that it will be very difficult to get advices of the time of their sailing. Every ship of war at Brest and Toulon is fitted out, and those building at Toulon and Brest will be fitted out with the greatest expedition.

The Brest squadron have received orders to sail.

List of the Navy of France.

At Brest 24 ships of the line :

	The Soleil Royal	.	.	of 80 guns.
	Formidable	.	.	of 80 „
	Tonnant	.	.	of 80 „
	Magnifique	.	.	of 74 „
5	Intrépide	.	.	of 74 „
	Entreprenant	.	.	of 74 „
	Conquérant	.	.	of 74 „
	Héros	.	.	of 74 „
	Palmier	.	.	of 74 „
10	Scipion	.	.	of 74 „
	Courageux	.	.	of 74 „
	Défenseur	.	.	of 74 „
	Dauphin Royal	.	.	of 70 „
	Algonquin	.	.	of 70 „
15	Superbe	.	.	of 70 „
	Northumberland	.	.	of 64 „
	Prothée	.	.	of 64 „
	Dragon	.	.	of 64 „
	Illustre	.	.	of 64 „
20	Opiniâtre	.	.	of 64 „
	Actif	.	.	of 64 „
	Léopard	.	.	of 60 „
	St. Michael	.	.	of 64 „
24	Amphion	.	.	of 60 „

21 frigates and other vessels :

5 of 50 guns.	1 of 22 guns.
1 of 46 „	2 of 12 „
8 of 30 „	—
3 of 26 „	21
1 of 24 „	

At Rochefort 10 ships of the line :

	The Duc de Bourgogne	.	.	of 80 guns.
	Prudent	.	.	of 74 „
	Glorieux	.	.	of 74 „
	Florissant	.	.	of 74 „
5	Juste	.	.	of 70 „
	Hardi	.	.	of 64 „
	Inflexible	.	.	of 64 „
	Éveillé	.	.	of 64 „
	Capricieux	.	.	of 64 „
10	Raisonnable	.	.	of 64 „

14 frigates and other vessels :

	2 of 50 guns.	3 of 26 guns.
	1 of 46 „	3 of 24 „
	1 of 34 „	1 of 20 „
	1 of 32 „	—
	2 of 30 „	14

At Toulon 18 ships of the line :

	The Foudroyant	.	.	of 80 guns.
	Océan	.	.	of 80 „
	Couronne	.	.	of 74 „
	Redoutable	.	.	of 74 „
5	Téméraire	.	.	of 74 „
	Guerrier	.	.	of 74 „
	Hector	.	.	of 74 „
	Bizarre	.	.	of 64 „
	Bienfaisant	.	.	of 64 „
10	Sphinx	.	.	of 64 „
	Triton	.	.	of 64 „
	Content	.	.	of 64 „
	Achille	.	.	of 64 „
	Orphée	.	.	of 64 „
15	Sage	.	.	of 64 „
	Lion	.	.	of 64 „
	Hercule	.	.	of 64 „
18	Vaillant	.	.	of 64 „

13 frigates :

3 of 50 guns.	2 of 18 guns.
1 of 46 „	1 of 14 „
1 of 40 „	—
1 of 34 „	13
4 of 24 „	

Ships of the line building at Toulon :

The Souverain . . .	of 74 guns
Centaure . . .	of 74 „
Protecteur . . .	of 74 „
Fantasque . . .	of 64 „
Modeste . . .	of 64 „

Ships of the line building at Brest :

The Diadème . . .	of 74 guns.
Minotaure . . .	of 74 „
Zodiaque . . .	of 74 „
Robuste . . .	of 64 „
Belliqueux . . .	of 64 „
Solitaire . . .	of 64 „
7 Célèbre . . .	of 64 „

[No. 12. C.]

Recd. 25th February.

Not only the infantry in Lorraine and Alsace are in march towards Brittany and Normandy, but also the infantry in many other provinces have received the same orders, and there is no doubt but it is the French King's serious resolution to attempt an invasion or, more properly, invasions with a great army, at all events.

[No. 18. B. 3.]

Recd. 25th February.

Mons. Périer's squadron was still in the road of Brest on the 4th instant, and was making no preparations for sailing, though the wind was fair that day. It is thought they are waiting for news

from L'Orient, and that they may be employed in convoying the 6 ships which are equipping there. They are fitting out at Brest 3 ships of the line, viz., The Illustre, Palmier, and Léopard. It is assured that these 3 ships are to be armed *en flûte* to transport troops to Canada. A very considerable fleet of merchant ships, convoyed by 5 frigates, arrived in the port of Brest on the 2nd instant. That fleet was loaded with victuals and wines which were greatly wanted for the ships fitting out there, and for the town itself. Two other frigates are likewise arrived there with 150 pieces of cannon of different bore, and a greater number is expected in a few days.

The Prudent of 74 guns, with the frigates Zéphir and Atalante, sailed from Rochefort the 30th January. It is thought they are going to Brest, but they were not arrived there on the 4th. If Marshal Belleisle's great projects of invasion should take place, it is not [im]possible but the merchant ships which carried victuals to Brest may be retained there, to be employed as transport ships for the troops.

[No. 19. B. 3.]

Rec^d. 25th February.

M. Périer's squadron was still in the road on the 11th, though he had completed the victualling of his ships, as the wind seemed then inclined to change; he will, perhaps, have sailed since, though it was almost certain that an English squadron was waiting for him. It is now thought that he is bound for the American Islands. Mons. de Conflans arrived at Brest on the 9th instant. This fleet can't be well got ready before the 20th of March. Marshal Belleisle was expected there. The ships from Rochefort not having appeared yet, it is imagined they went directly to Martinico.

Three frigates of 40 guns and two of 26 are building at Rochelle. Several regiments from Givet and other garrisons in the neighbourhood of the Meuse are filing off towards the sea coasts. Several engineers are employed in marking out a camp near Mardyck. Three bilanders loaded with palisades are arrived at Dunkirk. What they are intended for is not known. They continue to bring in there a great number of trees and large quantities of timber, upon which several hands are at work. They complain much in being [in] want of iron cannon.

Capt. Whitwell.

[No. 42. Ad.]

24th February.

I have been and looked into the port of Havre de Grâce, and got what intelligence I could from two Spanish snows coming off thence, bound to Bilboa, as I was standing in yesterday afternoon, who informed me on Sunday sennight two French frigates, between 30 and 40 guns each, arrived there from Brest and were refitting with all expedition ; where bound could not inform me, but said there were two more of the same just ready to be launched and were ordered to be fitted. As to any troops of any sort collecting in that port he declared was false, for there was not more than 14 or 16 sail altogether.

Intelligence from a Master of a Vessel belonging to Rotterdam.

[No. 43. Ad.]

Recd. 25th February.

Says he left Caen in Normandy on Friday, the 20th of this month, and that, in the 6 or 7 days he was in that city, there came into it about 15,000 French troops who marched the succeeding day

to the neighbouring villages and towns towards Cape Barfleur ; that he was informed the whole number expected was about 25,000, of which 5,000 were to remain there, to be in readiness to be employed in an invasion designed upon some part of the British dominions.

[No. 21. D.]

Recd. 26th February.

Clare's regiment, which is now at Lille, is ordered to Granville ; and Berwick's, from St. Omer's, to Cherbourg ; the Regiment of Royal Artillery of 4 battalions is in motion, one battalion goes to Calais, another to Havre, and two into Languedoc, from whence the Duke de Richelieu with the Toulon fleet is to attempt the taking of Minorca. The train of artillery with each of the above battalions is from 20 to 30 twenty-four pounders and two field pieces. Great numbers of troops are marching to Brittany and Normandy ; many transports are preparing there, and a vast quantity of gunpowder is already in different magazines along the coast.

[No. 20. B. 3.]

Recd. 27th February.

Several barks which have been built along the River Seine are sent successively to Rouen. Great numbers of troops are to be assembled in Lower Normandy. The Duc d'Harcourt and other officers are already arrived at Caen (the headquarters), Bayeux, Carentan, Coutances, St. Lo, etc. All the seamen who arrive in any of the ports in the Mediterranean and Ocean are immediately sent to those ports where any of the King's ships are fitting out. There is a battalion of Royal Artillery and Engineers at Boulogne, and another at Havre, destined for the embarkation ; there is, likewise, one upon their march to Toulon, where,

'tis said, they are to be embarked with 14 battalions for an expedition against Port Mahon, which M. de Maillebois is to command. The *Thétis* and *Comète* are arrived from Brest to Havre with stores and rigging from the *Blonde* and *Brune* frigates. It is certain that the French are in want of naval stores and chiefly of iron cannon, and that, as the King's naval officers seize upon everything of that kind that come in, it will be difficult to fit out privateers, especially now that all seamen upon their arrival are pressed for the King's ships; however, they seriously think at Bordeaux of fitting out privateers.

Several regiments are upon their march towards the coasts of Normandy and Brittany, and large quantities of warlike stores from Douai, Valenciennes, and Laffere are filing off the same way. It is affirmatively said that there will be in the ports of Brittany and Normandy about 600 flat bottomed boats to be made use of for a descent, and that the Pretender keeps near at hand. They are always hard at work at Dunkirk in preparing materials for the building of frigates, as also in making wheelbarrows to be used for cleaning the Basin. There are 24 battalions and 600 marines in Dunkirk, Bergues St. Winoc, Gravelines, Calais, and Boulogne. The garrison in that neighbourhood are always the same; they have received orders at Bourbourg to prepare stables for four squadrons of cavalry.

Mr. Barham to Mr. Amyand.

[No. 320. Ad.]

28th February. Recd. 29th February.

The only intelligence that I have this day learnt from Calais: that the troops which were ordered from the interior parts towards the sea

coast have received counter orders ; that everything seems to be very quiet, at present, at Calais.

[No. 21. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd March.

M. Périer's squadron is not yet sailed the seventeenth past ; as soon as they have put to sea, the ships, which are to compose the squadron under the command of Mons. de Conflans, will go into the road as they are ready. Three of those ships, as was said before, are to be armed *en flûte* to carry troops to Canada. A man has been picked out of every company of infantry for that service and they are upon their march to Brest. It is supposed that the Prudent and the two frigates which sailed from Rochefort, the 30th January, are gone directly to Martinico to carry ammunition, etc., thither for the island of St. Lucia. They still go on in sending away warlike stores, especially towards Calais ; they are hard at work at Dunkirk upon the rigging and timber for the two frigates which have been before mentioned.

[No. 25. B. 3.]

Recd. 4th March.

As they have no news of Mons. Périer at Brest they conclude he is got out at sea. A considerable train of artillery has passed by Soissons in its way to Havre de Grâce, Calais, and Boulogne, at which places they are collecting great quantities. It is not known whether the first attempt of a descent will be made from those parts or from those of Brittany. However, it seems as if the primal preparations were making in the former. The departure of Marshal Belleisle and Prince de Soubise is not yet spoken of ; they, in all probability, [will] not set out till everything is disposed for the expedition, which cannot be very near at hand, for there must be time for the arrival of the artillery, which is on the road on

the coasts they are destined to ; but it is apparent that the march of the last body of troops is regulated in such a manner that when it arrives on the coasts everything will be ready for embarkation.

Madrid—Sir Benj. Keene.

[No. — P.]

13th February. Recd. 6th March.

From the number of troops assembled on the French coasts that are the nearest his Majesty's dominions, the extensive command and active, inveterate spirit of Marshal Belleisle, his discourses, when a prisoner, that with a regiment of Grassins he would undertake to march from one end of England to the other end, from the naval preparations at Brest co-operate with the troops, it is evident that it is the resolution of the Court of Versailles to make a descent on Great Britain. The expense¹ is made they have not ships to cope with us at sea. The great and salutary measures taken by his Majesty by his several preventive treaties have left no door open nor even a possibility of employing their formidable forces on the Continent. This, therefore, is the only means left them for their pouring forth their wrath against us, and what will they lose but men (whom they can well spare) in case they are disappointed in their attempt?

[No. 22. B. 3.]

Recd. 7th March.

A great quantity of timber for building ships is arrived at Toulon, especially from Holland ; the number of hands in the yard for building and equipping ships is doubled. Since the departure of the *Prudent*, the *Atalante*, and *Zéphir* from Rochefort are arrived at Brest ; the following

¹ *Sic.* (?) 'excuse.'

ships of the line are gone into the Road, viz., the *Juste*, *Eveill *, *Aquilon*, *Capricieux*, *Dauphin Royal*, and *Inflexible*. It is said they are to join the squadron of *Messieurs Conflans* and *Bauffremont* at Brest. *M. P rier* sailed from Brest the 19th February ; his squadron consists of 4 ships of the line, and three frigates. It is thought he is going to take upon him the Government of Saint Domingo and to supply the French colonies with provisions.

On the 26th six frigates sailed from Brest to convoy a fleet of merchant ships. *L'Arc en Ciel* is gone into the Road, and all the other ships of *Mons. de Conflans's* squadron will go there as soon as they are ready. This fleet will consist of 22 ships and ten frigates, reckoning those which are at sea. Some of these ships will be fitted out for transporting troops. The *Arc en Ciel* has only her upper tier of guns and a complement of 250 men. Letters from Paris say that the pretended flat-bottomed boats are pontoons of a new construction, which can be put up so as to take little room in the ships ; 500 of them are arrived at Rouen where they have hired 12 ships to transport them to Havre. These pontoons are to serve, when the troops disembark, in making bridges in those places where the ships cannot come near enough the shore to land men.

They have cleared on the banks of the river, near Rouen, a spot of ground for forming a camp, and at Havre orders are given for removing all the wood which crowded the jetty ; they have also destroyed the yards for ship-building in order to level the ground and form a camp there. From Furnes it is said that the reports of the arrival of flat-bottomed boats at Calais and Dunkirk is false ; there are only 48 ships which are of different

sizes and nations, several of which are unrigged. They continue to send stores to the coasts of France.

Hague.

[Hague: No. 21. A.]

2nd March. Recd. 7th March.

A camp will be formed in the month of March from Dunkirk to Boulogne, which they pretend will consist of 40,000 men. There are actually 32 transport ships at Boulogne; they expect more in the month of March, which will be escorted by two frigates which are at Havre, called the Brune and the Blonde.

[No. 23. B. 3.]

Recd. 9th March.

Mons. Périer came into Brest the 21st February and sailed again the 23rd; the wind having been northward they imagine he is out at sea. Mons. Périer himself was sick in bed. They continue the dispositions on the coasts of France for the reception of troops which are to assemble there. Nothing new from the coasts of Normandy. Stores and provisions arrive still on the coasts of France. At Calais a large quantity of meal and biscuits is arrived, which is carried to the magazines. St. Omer is the grand mart for these sort of things.

It is given out that the Blonde and Brune frigates, built at Havre, are to convoy 60 transport ships to Boulogne. The regiments of Bulkeley and Dillon have received their tents; the two regiments expect them. The garrison of Douai, Valenciennes, and Lille are to be relieved by the militia.

Ludlow Castle, off Havre—Capt. Saumarez.

[No. 49. Ad.]

7th March. Recd. 9th March.

I sailed from Spithead on Friday last and arrived at Havre, the next day, when I stood in as

near as possible, and sent a cutter off the harbour mouth, who informed me that there was close under the town 8 sail of ships, four of which appeared to be very large and ready for sea, besides a number of small ones ; but, they laying close under the town, was not able to count them. In the afternoon I took a little fishing boat with an old man in her, who acquainted me that about 5 days ago 2 frigates, of 26 guns each, arrived at Havre from Brest to convoy two more of the same rate to Brest, and that there were two others almost ready for launching. That at Caen there are 25,000 men just got in, and others marching in every day ; that there are no flat-bottomed boats nor more fishing boats than usual.

Dover—Mr. Barham to Mr. Amyand.

[No. 321. A.]

10th March. Recd. 11th March.

I am informed this morning from [Calais] that yesterday a great number of bomb-shells to the amount of 600 were brought into that town and are at present laying upon the quay, but, as to their further destination, it is at present a profound secret ; there has, likewise, within this day or two arrived at the above-mentioned town about 60 cannoniers, and it is talked that more troops are soon expected in that neighbourhood, but, notwithstanding these mighty warlike preparations, I cannot learn that they are taking any steps to increase their shipping at that place which, at present, is very inconsiderable.

[No. 24. B. 3.]

Recd. 13th March.

From Paris we hear that Mons. Périer's squadron had put back again into Brest the 24th February, and sailed again, the 26th. Mons. Périer was much better.

The motions of the troops on the French coasts continue, as well as sending stores and artillery, especially towards those of Normandy. They talk of assembling a body of troops at the Isle de Ré, which are to be sent to Canada. From Furnes it is said that they continue to send ammunition towards the coast of Normandy and Brittany, particularly towards Havre. They are filling the magazines at Boulogne and Calais with provisions. On the 7th three ships laden with corn arrived at Dunkirk, which was immediately put into the magazine there.

Accounts from the frontiers say that they continue the dispositions for forming a camp in the beginning of April near St. Omer and another near Havre, and are making stores of ammunition and provisions all along the sea coasts.

[No. 14. C.]

Recd. 15th March.

The measures concerted for the execution of the invasion are pushed on with the greatest vigour and activity. The artillery, arms, stores, ammunition, &c., are embarked, when they arrive at the ports they are sent to, that everything may be ready as soon as such an enterprise will admit of ; but if they resolve on embarking the horses necessary to draw the cannon, it will make a delay.

[No. 26. B. 3.]

Recd. 18th March.

There has been no news of M. Périer since his departure ; he goes first to St. Domingo and is afterwards to join again the Prudent and the two frigates from Rochefort at the Island of St. Lucia in order to go upon a projected expedition.

The fitting out of the Brest fleet, which is to be commanded by M. Conflans, goes on very briskly. The Arc en ciel and Superbe are already in the road ; 6 more ships are to be forthwith put

into commission, but the general state of the officers of the fleet, under Mons. de Conflans, was not yet come from Court to Brest on the 6th instant. The Blonde and Brune in company with the Arnelisle¹ and Comète were hourly expected there.

The frigate Friponne is gone to Rochefort to join the 6 men of war which lie in the Road of the Island of Aix; there are only remaining in that port the Duc de Bourgogne of 80 guns and the Havre² of 64, which will soon be got ready, and then these 9 ships will go to Brest and join the fleet under Mons. de Conflans. The preparations along the coast of Normandy and Brittany are going on, and all the troops for the intended expedition will soon arrive there. There are 30 French ships in the port of Boulogne taken upon the King's account, and there are upon the stocks there five flat-bottomed boats of 40 feet in length and ten in breadth. Numbers of seamen arrive daily in that part, from whence they are immediately sent to Brest as well as those that come from Calais, Gravelines, and Dunkirk. All the ships in these ports have been measured to know how many people they can hold.

Twelve more bilanders loaded with cannon as well as with bombs, and bombs computed to be about 10,000, are arrived at Calais; they are immediately brought into the harbour where straw, hatchets, and pick-axes are collected. Calais is the place where all these sorts of things are laid up. A company of artillery-men, six engineers, and some miners are likewise arrived there, and 20 pieces of cannon and 6 mortars have been sent to Fort le Blanc, which is 4 leagues

¹ *Sic.* (?) Amethiste.

² *Sic.* (?) Hardi.

distant from that place in the road to Boulogne. There is a battery of 6 pieces of cannon on the left and one of 3 on the right of the Port of Boulogne.

It is given out, notwithstanding the preparations that are making at Calais and in that neighbourhood, it will be only from the coasts of Normandy and Brittany that the expeditions are to be dispatched, but there is no trusting to such sly reports. However, the Pretender is very little talked of.

Off the Isle of d'Yeu—Capt. Vernon.

[No. 53. Ad.]

15th March. Recd. 19th March.

Encloses intelligence from Cokburne of the Hunter cutter, and adds that it agrees with what he had learnt the day before from a French pilot and from a Dutch vessel which he met with off Ushant.

Cokburne's Intelligence, on the 14th, at 12 o'clock.
—I saw ten sail of men-of-war riding at anchor between the Islands of Aix and Oléron; 4 sail of frigates, one of them 46 guns going to Rochefort to dock and repair, the other three came from Brest 4 days ago to convoy the coast fleet which is about 20 or 30 sail, and which I saw riding within them at anchor. The Duke de Bourbon, a new ship of 70 guns, is coming down from Rochefort this spring.

[No. 15. C.]

Recd. 22nd March.

From the manner in which some of the Court talked of the attack of Minorca, it might be suspected that it was intended to induce the Court of Great Britain to weaken their army in England, but by several things since known that design seems to be real and to merit the attention

of the Court. All the officers, absent from the regiments to be employed, have received orders to join their corps and are set out. Great quantities of biscuits are sent down to the ports of Normandy and Brittany; they are said to be intended for the use of the troops after they arrive in England, and a plan has been made for forming a camp almost as strong as a fortified town. From many other circumstances it is very probable an invasion will be attempted with great numbers, notwithstanding all the difficulties that attend it.

[No. 27. B. 3.]

Recd. 23rd March.

The disposition of the armament at Brest is arrived there from Court. The *Bienfaisant* and *Sphinx*, both of 64 guns, were ordered to go and join the *Arc en Ciel* and *Superbe* in the Road, and the *Héros* of 74 guns, with the *Léopard* and *Illustre* of 64, were to follow soon after. Two hundred merchant ships which had carried victuals, etc., to Brest have sailed from thence, steering to the southward under the convoy of six frigates.

The regiments of *La Sarre* and *Rousillon*, each of two battalions, are expected at Brest about the 22nd and 24th, and will be embarked immediately upon their arrival there. The ships fitting out at *L'Orient* will receive two battalions and detachments of troops on board before they come to join the fleet at Brest; the ships that are expected there from *Rochefort* will, likewise, take troops on board at the Island of *Ré*. The number of troops intended for *Canada* will amount to 6,000 men.

Representations have been sent from Brest to Court against the number of ship's officers being regulated according to the Ordinance of 1689, which is renewed.

In consequence of an order from Court an embargo has been laid upon all the ships in the Port of Havre de Grace, and it was thought that this was done with a view to conceal the departure of the Blonde and Brune and of the 3 frigates which are come from Brest to convoy them ; it was not known whether they were going to Brest nor whether they would be accompanied thither by transport ships or not.

Count d'Estrées was to set out from Paris, on the 26th March, from Havre where everything is in motion. The troops continue to file off from all parts of the kingdom towards the coasts of Picardy, Normandy, and Brittany ; and it is believed that the embarkation will be supported by all the King's ships which are at Brest, Rochefort, etc.

They continue to cast cannon at Douai, from whence they are sending daily away bombs and balls towards the coasts. All the matrosses have been taken out of the magazines at Lille to send them to the coasts of Normandy and Brittany. Three regiments have been formed of deserters, who are promised their discharge after 3 years' service in the French navy.

[No. 28. B. 3.]

Recd. 26th March.

The embarkation at Brest is to be taken in hand as soon as possible. The nine men-of-war from Rochefort, and [] from L'Orient are daily expected there. The men-of-war which are to convoy the ships armed *en flûte*, with the 6,000 men on board for Canada, are only to see them to a certain latitude and come back afterwards to Brest, to assist in the scheme for landing in England. All the general officers are gone to the places of their destination, and Marshal Belleisle and Prince Soubise will immediately set out for Dunkirk.

The French Ministry have issued 50,000 livres for building two towers on the sea shore, one near Boulogne and the other near Calais.

The 4 battalions of marines who are at Dunkirk are ordered to hold themselves in readiness to march for Brest. A camp of observation is always talked of, soon to be formed in the neighbourhood of Dunkirk; they are hard at work there in finishing the frigate of 16 guns as well as in preparing the materials of two others of 24 guns each. The sending away of ammunition to Calais goes on.

[No. 56. Ad.]

21st March. Recd. 29th March.

General State [of] the marine of France from which the following abstract of ships belonging to the departments of Brest and Rochefort is taken, viz. :

BREST.

	Total	
	Line	Frigate.
At sea under the command, of		
M. Périer, bound to Saint		
Domingo: 1 of 74 guns, 1 of		
64, 2 of 50, and 2 frigates .	4	2
Sailed from Havre for Brest. .	—	4
At Nantes.	—	2
On a cruise	—	1
In the Road	—	3
Fitting out for M. de Conflans's		
squadron: 2 of 80 guns, 1 of		
74, 1 of 70, 2 of 64, 1 of 50 .	7	—
Ordered to transport troops to		
America: 1 of 74 guns, 2 of		
64 and 68, 3 frigates . . .	3	3

	Line	Total Frigate.
To go in quest of M. le Comte d'Aguittor ¹ : 2 frigates .	—	2
In condition to be fitted out:— 1 of 80 guns, 2 of 74, 4 of 64 and 60, 2 of 50	9	—
Under repair and in want thereof: 5 of 74 guns, 1 of 68, 1 of 64	7	—
Upon stocks: 3 of 74 guns, 2 of 64, 2 frigates at Havre .	5	2
To be set up: 1 of 74 guns, 2 of 64	3	—
	<hr/>	
Total	38	19

ROCHEFORT.

Gone to Martinico: 1 of 74 guns, 2 frigates	1	2
Gone to L'Isle Royal: 4 frigates of from 36 to 24 guns	—	4
Fitting in order to reinforce M. de Conflans: 1 of 80 guns, 2 of 70, 4 of 64 and 60, 1 frigate	7	1
Repairing: 1 of 74 guns	1	—
Upon stocks: 1 of 74 guns, 1 of 64	2	—
Ordered to be set up, 2 frigates .	—	2
	<hr/>	
Total at Rochefort	11	9

N.B.—The ships belonging to the department of Toulon are abstracted elsewhere.

¹ If, as seems possible, this means the Duc d'Aiguillon, the Governor-General of Brittany, 'go in quest of' must have the curious meaning of 'attend on.'

Admiralty Intelligence.

[No. 60. Ad.]

15th March. Recd. 1st April.

I parted from Rochelle the 15th of March last, where I had the following accounts of the French transactions in regard to the war. They are arming at Brest 15 ships of the line and about 20 frigates; at Rochefort 5 ships of the line and a good many frigates; at Toulon 5 of the line with several frigates. Admiral Macnémara set out from Paris for Brest the beginning of March, with orders to get the aforesaid ships ready with all possible expedition. It is thought that this naval force is to rendezvous the beginning of May betwixt the Islands of Aix and Ré, where there are at present 5 ships and 1 frigate at anchor, and not under the Island of Dieu as reported in last Saturday's paper.

[No. 16. C.]

Recd. 2nd April.

Troops continue to arrive on the coast of Normandy and Brittany. They imagine everything will be ready in less than a month, and it is believed a serious attempt will be made to land a great number of troops in England and Ireland, notwithstanding all the real difficulties and dangers they have to encounter.

[No. 31. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd April.

The embarkation of the troops at Brest for Canada will soon be completed; they are to be convoyed only by 3 ships of the line and 6 frigates. The rest of the ships of war as well at Brest as at L'Orient, are to act without doubt in supporting the French projects of an invasion. The camp near Dunkirk will be formed about the 15th of April. The right wing will be at Bourbourg and all along by Gravelines, Calais,

Boulogne, and even higher. The troops from Alsace come down towards the coasts of Furnes, those from Picardy march towards Brest.

From Furnes it is said that the National Regiments in that neighbourhood have orders to be in readiness to march by the 15th April; the Foreign Regiments will have the guard of the neighbouring places. The peasants of the Boulonnois, who are enrolled, have likewise orders to be in readiness with their arms and baggage at the same time. In several of the villages near Bourbourg, Gravelines, Calais, and towards Boulogne, orders are given for building ovens for bread.

The ships of the ports of Dunkirk, Boulogne and Calais may contain about 4,000 men. They are still for the most part unrigged.

[No. 13. C.]

Recd. 8th March.

Mention was made some time ago that the French had a design on Port Mahon. It has been since discovered that an offer has actually been made to the Court of Madrid to take that place at the expense of France; to assist them in the siege of Gibraltar, and to guarantee both these places to the Crown of Spain. What reception this offer has met with is not known. The Toulon squadron is fitting out with great expedition and will be employed in convoying the French troops to Minorca if the Court of Madrid come into the measures of France, if not they have another destination which, however, is not yet known.

It has been determined to send a great succour to Canada, and measures are taken conformable to the plan sent to the Court of France from Canada. 8,000 effective men with a large train

of artillery are demanded, and everything necessary to act offensively. The Court is convinced of the necessity of sending more troops thither than are asked, but is greatly embarrassed how to convoy them thither. Great preparations are making for forming the camps in Brittany, Normandy, and French Flanders; but the talk of an invasion is diminished and discouraged by the Court in order to lessen the alarm in England and prevent further recantations, for, since the Hessians have been sent for, the succour demanded of the Republic of Holland—and otherwise measures taken for guarding the English coasts—some persons of rank, who are to be of the expedition, grow every day more uneasy and more doubtful of the success. It will, however, be attempted, and it is said that war is to be declared by the first troops that land in England or Ireland.

INTELLIGENCE.

An account of the State of the French armaments, by Sea and Land on this side of the Straits, received between the 6th of April and the 31st of July, 1756.

Advices.

[No. 17. C.]

Recd. 7th April.

France is at present in a most terrible situation. Their finances are in great disorder, the Council divided, the animosity between the Parliament and the great Chamber runs very high, and they cannot make use of their superiority at land; this renders an invasion as desperate as it is necessary.

The superiority of the English fleet will put the French under great difficulties in America, and [they] think that if, by some unforeseen event, the face of their affairs does not change, their disputes about the limits of America will be terminated by the loss of Quebec.

[No. 32. B. 3.]

Recd. 7th April.

The Dauphin Royal, Juste, Capricieux, Éveillé, Inflexible, Aquilon, Fidèle, Hermione, Friponne, and Pomone, are in the road at the Isle of Aix. It is said they will be commanded by Monsieur Macnémara, Commandant at Rochefort.

[No. 35. B.]

Recd. 16th April.

Carriages and boats daily arrive at Havre laden with cannon and ammunition of all sorts, spades, pickaxes, and ladders, and an immense quantity of provisions. They have finished the building of the two 60-gun ships at L'Orient, and 7 others are on the stocks there of about the same size.

They continue sending provisions from Douai and Valenciennes to Cambray, and from thence in *ponts* along the Seine to Havre. In the arsenal at Dunkirk they are packing up 15,000 muskets, and a like number of bayonets and swords which are intended to be sent into Dunkirk, for which purpose small vessels are actually getting ready.

[No. 18. C.]

Recd. 20th April.

The Ministry repent their having prevented the Dutch from sending the succours of 6,000 men demanded by the English, since the refusal of the Republic has induced the Parliament to petition the King to bring over 10,000 of his electoral troops. Never was the French Court so surprised and confused as they were when they received that unexpected news. Mr. ———, in discourse with a person he confided in, said, after the news arrived, that he much feared the Hanoverian troops would render the invasion impracticable, as the English would now be enabled to assemble 2 corps of 20,000 men each, with a great body of horse and everything necessary, besides what forces might be destined for guarding the coasts, by which it appeared almost impossible to him that France could ever find an opportunity to land a force equal to what the English could immediately assemble, tho' they should determine to risk 80,000 men.

[No. 19. C.]

Recd. 5th May.

The necessity of succouring Canada hath determined the French Ministry to embark troops on single ships, [which] will be continued all the summer, and they must risk sacrificing 5 or 6 thousand men to get as many more there, it being of the greatest consequence to the French to preserve their possessions in America for this year, as the subject of the war would cease if the English should make any great progress there.

[No. 40. B. 3.]

Recd. 5th May.

The King has taken all the India Company's ships into his pay, and in recompense has given the commanders of those ships the rank of captains of frigates. At Havre they continue collecting pick-axes, shovels, and everything that denote an expedition.

[No. 20. C.]

Recd. 10th May.

Orders have been sent to L'Orient, Rochefort, and Rochelle to embark troops for Canada in single ships. It is thought the whole number to be shipped will exceed 8,000 men.

[No. 21. C.]

Recd. 24th May.

Notwithstanding the many and great disadvantages the French labour under in sending troops to America, they have taken the resolution of sending 10,000 men there this year, which, joined to the forces they have there already and to the Indians which have been disciplined, they think are much superior to the forces the English have there, according to the list the Court has received of them. If the English do not send out very large reinforcements of regular troops, they will be so far from making any conquests in America that they will not be able to

preserve their present possessions. By the foreign troops they have sent for to England, they have it in their power to embark more British regiments than will be sufficient to take the country in dispute, and the expense of transporting such a body will bear no proportion to the continuance of the war for another year or to making a dishonourable peace.

[Campveer : No. 78. Ad.]

23rd May. Recd. 25th May.

By advices from several ports in France it is believed here that there are a considerable number of privateers all in readiness to turn out in one day. A week ago I was shewed one of the letters, which mentioned besides that there were eight Swedish and eight Danish ships of war arrived at Brest, but no confirmation of the unlikely story.

[No. 45. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd June.

The English vessels appear about Havre ; there are 150 merchant ships there which dare not stir. Besides the 4 frigates which were built at Havre, there are 3 others on the stocks far advanced. They are busy there preparing necessaries for sieges and a campaign ; 1,500 barrels, each containing 200 lb. of nourishing powder for the soldiers in case of need, arrived there the 17th of May, and a like quantity has been sent to many places on the coast. The camps will not take place till about a month after the return of Marshall Belleisle.

[No. 46. B. 3.]

State of the ships and frigates which are fitted out and designed to be in the port of Brest, Toulon, and Rochefort, with their destination, in May 1756 :

SHIPS AT THE PORT OF BREST.

*Squadron under M. de Conflans, Lieut. Gen^l of the
Navy in the Road of Brest.*

BREST DIVISION.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Captains.
Soleil Royal .	80	M. De Conflans, L ^t Gen ^l
Tonnant .	80	Bauffremont, Ch. d'Esc.
Superbe .	74	d'Aché
Défenseur .	74	Blénac
Sphinx .	64	Cousages
Bienfaisant .	64	Chasteloger

ROCHEFORT DIVISION.

Dauphin Royal .	74	Du Verger
Juste .	74	Macnémara
Inflexible .	64	Tilly
Capricieux .	64	Des Gouttes
Éveillé .	64	Merville

*Squadron under M. Périer destined for
the American Islands.*

Courageux .	74	Périer, Ch. d' Esc.
Prothée .	64	Roquefeuil
Amphion .	50	de Vienne
Aigle .	50	St. Allouarn
Fleur de Lys .	30	Marnière
Émeraude .	28	Périer fils

Ships armed en flûte with Troops for Canada.

Héros .	74	Beaussier
Illustre .	64	Montalais
Léopard .	60	Gomain
Licorne .	30	La Rigaudière
Sauvage .	30	Tourville
Sirène .	30	Breugnon

Ships destined to go to Port Louis and take on board the Troops for Louisbourg.

Arc en Ciel	.	50	Belingant
Concorde	.	30	Fouquet

Ships destined to Guard the Coast and to protect the Trade from Port to Port.

Brune	.	30	Trédern
Blonde	.	30	St. Lazare
Améthiste.	.	30	Du Bos
Comète	.	30	Deklins [<i>sic</i>]
Thétis	.	24	De Vandert [<i>sic</i>]
Cumberland	.	24	Mesedern
Mutine	.	24	Courserac
Galatée	.	24	Bayard
Héroïne	.	24	Berry [<i>sic</i>]

Ships fitting out.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Ships' names.	Guns.
Formidable	80	Actif	64
Entreprenant	74	St. Michael	60
Palmier	74	Alcyon	50
Bizarre	64	Apollon	50
Opiniâtre	64		

Frigates under the Command of M. Le Duc D'Aiguillon.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Captains.
Amaranthe	12	Quelen, Lieut. de Vaiss.
Anémone	12	Graphy, Ens. de Vaiss.

Ships at the Port of Toulon.

Squadron under Mons^r. le Comte de la Galissonnière, Lieut. Genl. of the Navy for the Expedition to Port Mahon.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Captains.
Foudroyant .	80	La Galissonnière, L ^t . Gen ^l .
Redoutable .	74	Glandevéz, Ch. d'Esc.
Téméraire .	74	Beaumont.
Guerrier .	74	La Brosse.
Lion. .	64	St. Aignan.
Sage. .	64	Du Revest.
Orphée .	64	Raimond d'Eaux.
Content .	64	Sabran.
Triton .	64	Mercier.
Hippopotame .	50	Rochemore.
Fier .	50	D'Herville.
Junon .	50	Beaussier.
Rose .	30	Costebelle.
Gracieuse .	24	Marquisan.
Topaze .	24	Carné.
Pléiade .	26	de Mony [<i>sic</i>].
Nymphe .	24	Calian.

Ships at Port of Rochefort.

Squadron under M^r. D'Aubigny destined for the American Islands.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Captains.
Prudent .	74	d'Aubigny.
Atalante .	34	Du Chaffault.
Zéphir .	30	La Zouche [<i>sic</i>].

The five ships destined for de Conflans's squadron are inserted in the Article of Brest.

Ships destined to guard the Coasts and to protect the Trade from Port to Port.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Captains.
Aquilon . .	46	Merville.
Hermione . .	26	Thereau [<i>sic</i>].
Fidèle . .	26	Lizardais.
Friponne . .	24	Mecheim [<i>sic</i>].
Diane . .	30	Noe (? Desnos).
Valeur . .	26	Macarthy.

Flûtes at Rochefort destined to South and North America.

Ships' names.	Guns.	Captains.
Chariot Royal .	26	de Carné.
Perdrix . .	12	{ Le Chev. de Vaudreuil; actually loading for Louisbourg.
Rhinocéros .	16	

Ships ordered to be fitted out.

Duc de Bourgogne, of .	80 guns.
Florissant	74 „
Hardi	64 „
Pomone	30 „

State of the ships which remain in the different Ports of Brest, Toulon, and Rochefort, and of those which are upon the Stocks.

Ships at the Port of Brest.

Ships fitting out.

Intrépide, of	74 guns.
Conquérant	74 „
Magnifique	74 „
Algonquin	74 „

Sceptre	74 guns.
Northumberland . .	74 „
Dragon	64 „

Ships building.

Zodiaque	74 guns.
Diadème	74 „
Minotaure	74 „
Bellicieux	64 „
Célèbre	64 „

Ships ordered upon the Stocks.

Robuste	74 guns.
Solitaire	64 „
Two (without names) .	74 „

Ships which remain at Havre and are ordered to be fitted out.

Vestale	30 guns
Aigrette	30 „

Ships at the Port of Toulon.

Ships which remain to be Armed.

Achille	64 guns.
Hercule	64 „
Ferme	74 „

(To be Refitted.)

Oriflamme	50 guns.
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Ships upon the Stocks.

Océan	80 guns.
Hector	74 „

Centaure	.	.	.	74 guns.
Souverain	.	.	.	74 „
Vaillant .	.	.	.	64 „
Oiseau .	.	.	.	26 „
Minerve .	.	.	.	26 „

Ships ordered upon the Stocks.

Protecteur	.	.	.	74 guns.
Fantasque	.	.	.	74 „
Modeste .	.	.	.	64 „

Ships at the Port of Rochefort.

All the Ships of this port are armed or contained in the State of Ships which are ordered to be fitted out.

Ships upon the Stocks.

Glorieux	.	.	.	74 guns.
Raisonnable	.	.	.	64 „
Mefiamo [<i>sic</i>]	.	.	.	30 „
Surprise .	.	.	.	30 „

Ships which are upon the stocks of the East India Company, whose building is entrusted to the King's shipbuilders, and which are destined for the Service of the Navy, if the King wants them.

Comte De Provence .	.	.	.	74 guns.
Bienaimé	.	.	.	74 „
Vengeur	.	.	.	74 „
Orient .	.	.	.	70 „
Fortune .	.	.	.	70 „
Brillant .	.	.	.	70 „
Sylphide	.	.	.	30 „
Diligente	.	.	.	30 „

[No. 32. A.]

Hague : 1st June. Recd. 4th June.

The French troops along the eastern part of the Coast are, as is said, to encamp the 14th of June, and that Marshal Belleisle is daily expected at Dunkirk.

[No. 22. C.]

Recd. 5th June.

It is believed that all thought of invading England have been laid aside since the Hessians and Hanoverians were taken into the English pay. This will allow Great Britain to finish the contest in North America by sending a large body of regular troops there, where they will be wanted, as a great many men have been sent out in single ships as well as in ships of war, which will be continued during the summer, so that if the Court of England hope to make any progress in attacking Canada they must have a greater force of regular troops there.

[No. 23. C.]

Recd. 12th June.

The Resolution has been taken in the Council to augment the navy of France with 20 ships of the line besides those that are actually on the stocks, and this will be executed with the greatest diligence, the French Ministers being now convinced of the necessity of having a very strong fleet to protect their own commerce and to distress the English nation several ways. The truth of this advice may be depended upon.

[No. 33. A.]

15th June. Recd. 18th June.

All the houses at Dunkirk are marked for lodging the troops which are expected there ; but their number is not known, neither is it possible to say anything with any degree of certainty whether they are to be encamped, cantoned, or embarked, because the orders vary from one day

to another ; as to a camp, it has already been changed and delayed from different times.

The regiments of Harcourt Dragoons, and those of Compiègne Infantry are all marching down towards the coasts as well as the regiment of La Tour du Pins for Havre de Grâce.

[No. 51. B. 3.]

Recd. 2nd July.

Everything is in motion on the coasts for the intended camps, and it is said for certain that the project on the Isles of Jersey and Guernsey is serious.

[No. 25. C.]

Recd. 5th July.

The Prince of Soubise and Marshal Belleisle are setting out for Dunkirk ; they conjointly visit the sea coasts from thence to Havre, after passing in review the troops that are assembling between Dunkirk and Calais.

[No. 26. C.]

Recd. 12th July.

It is said that orders have been given in France to take the ships in several ports in the Channel into the King's pay and that they are to be fitted up as transports. It is confidently affirmed that the Court of France do not really intend an invasion, but only to distress the Government of England, for there are not vessels in the French ports of the Channel sufficient to embark a great number of troops.

[No. 54. B. 3.]

Recd. 12th July.

M. de Conflans' squadron is still in Brest road ; the ships from Rochefort are not yet arrived. 'Tis said for certain at Paris that the French King will, about the 20th, make a tour to Dunkirk and Calais to visit the camps and coast. Orders are sent to all the ports in the Channel and on the sea coasts to embark by turns all the

troops that are encamped in order for them to make their evolutions, and to use them to the sea and to exercise them in landing, which the troops on shore are to oppose as if they were enemies. The camps will open on the 15th; the regiments [are] on their march, and are cantoned as they arrive; there will be 100 battalions and 52 squadrons from Dunkirk to Brest.

There are actually in the artillery park at Havre 150 pieces of cannon, and stores and provisions of all kinds. Marshal Belleisle arrived at Dunkirk, the 7th of July, accompanied by eight noblemen. They are at work in the arsenal in making 600,000 cartridges.

There are arrived at Calais 20 pieces of cannon of 12 pounders, 10 Swedish 4 pounders, 10 great mortars and 8 waggons full of cartridges; a like number of artillery is likewise gone from Douai and the environs for the coast of Normandy. The camp at Bourbourg is still fixed for the 15th or 16th July.

[No. 27. C.]

Recd. 19th July.

Elated as this Court is with their success, it is not improbable they may order an embarkation hoping thereby to add to the consternation and confusion they believe the receipt of this news will bring on your Ministry as well as the nation in general.

[No. 57. B. 3.]

Recd. 24th July.

They are equipping a new squadron at Brest. The English ought to be well upon their guard, for the feigned embarkations which they are beginning on the coasts of the Channel may one day prove real to England. Four battalions of the old Marines and two of Poitou went from Dunkirk on the 16th for the camp between that

place and Mardyck, so that there will not be a camp at Bourbourg. The battalions in camp are to be relieved monthly ; the regiments destined for the other camps along the coast are also on their march ; they are called camps of observation and exercise. The nine ships mentioned in former advices are all rigged, but they have not yet got their guns.

[No. 58. B. 3.]

Recd. 27th July.

A vessel arrived at Rochelle brings word that M. Périer de Salvert, with his squadron and barques with troops, was to make an expedition against the English. They talk of Barbados, the conquest of which they think will be very easy, because there are but few people. Jamaica is also talked of, but it is not reasonable to imagine the English would let it be done quietly. The question seems to be whether the English will be able to defend themselves against a sudden blow, supposing the French to be beforehand with them.

Turin—Earl of Bristol.

[No. 121.]

14th July. Recd. 30th July.

A part of the Brest squadron will, if possible, get into the Mediterranean to join Monsieur de la Galissonnière. The enemy has given out that the ships under the Comte de la Motte are intended for North America, but their real view is to strengthen their Toulon fleet.

Ostend.

[No. 89. Ad.]

31st July.

The three fishing boats which, some time ago, went from Dunkirk upon a secret expedition are

to serve as pilots to sixteen sail of Swedish and Danish men of war which are bound to Brest, and are come thro' the sounds, and down the Channel with every material on board for fitting out 14 sail of the line which are ready to launch at Brest.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE ADMIRALTY.

It appears that Brest and Havre de Grâce were the two places from whence the invasion of Great Britain was in February and March 1756 intended to be made, or more probably the troops were to be embarked from Havre and to be supported by a fleet to be assembled at Brest, which it was said would be ready by the 4th March (vide Intelligence received 1st and 3rd February).

In a list of the French navy (received 24th February) it appears they had 24 ships of the line and 21 frigates at Brest, and 10 ships of the line and 14 frigates at Rochefort, in all 34 ships of the line, 35 frigates of 50 guns and under, besides 7 ships of the line that were then building at Brest.

Exact intelligence of what number of these ships were about the end of February or beginning of March ready to sail was not easy to be obtained : however, it appears by the intelligence received 7th March that the Brest fleet was to consist of 22 ships and 10 frigates, including those at sea, and, by the intelligence of 18th March, that there were 9 ships of the line to go to Brest from Rochefort. Whether these 9 were considered as part of the 22 ships does not certainly appear. Admiralty intelligence received on the 1st April, dated 15th March, says they are arming at Brest 15 ships of the line and about 20 frigates, and at Rochefort 5 ships of the line and a good many frigates.

It appears by intelligence received on 9th March that this fleet was, in fact, in great forwardness [in] the beginning of March ; that there were a few days before at Havre . . . 8 sail of ships, 4 very large, and 10 sail of men of war riding at anchor between the islands of Aix and Oléron. Sir Edward Hawke's orders for taking under his command 12 ships of the line to cruise off Brest are dated 27th February, to which two other ships were added, lying off Plymouth, by an order dated 8th March. Sir Edward Hawke sailed from St. Helens ; the state of the French strength at Brest and Rochefort, and the intelligence set forth of their seriously intending at that time to invade England, with the other reasons in the former papers, sufficiently shew the wisdom and necessity of that measure.

If Sir Edward Hawke had not sailed to cruise off Brest, but had been sent directly to Minorca, what could have prevented the junction of the Rochefort and Brest fleets, and their being employed in supporting the invasion which was then intended by France, and which was not dropped till the beginning of April after our voting the sending for the Hessians and Hanoverians ? or what would have prevented their following the English fleet to the Mediterranean and putting it between two fires, which must have been extremely fatal ? Besides this, the French were about this time fitting out at Brest and Rochefort several ships for transporting troops to Canada and a small fleet for the West Indies, under Monsieur Périer, who sailed from Brest the 19th February with 4 ships of the line and 3 frigates.

With respect to the preparation and destination of the English ships at home during this period, it appears their employment, exclusive

of the Downs squadron, between the 1st January and 30th April 1756 was as follows :

6th Jan.—Rear Admiral Townshend with the Dreadnought was sent to Jamaica.

9th Jan.—Vice Admiral Osborn with 12 of the line and 4 frigates went to cruise off Brest.

17th Jan.—4 ships of the line were ordered to accompany the Hampshire and outward bound East India ships 100 leagues into the sea and then to return to St. Helens.

27th Feb.—Sir Edward Hawke was ordered with 12 ships of the line to cruise off Brest.

8th March.—Captain Gayton was ordered with the Antelope (50), Windsor (60), and Eagle (60) to proceed off Cape Barfleur and to cruise there till further orders : on the 18th of the same month the Windsor and Eagle were ordered to leave that station and cruise the former between Scilly and Ushant, and the latter between Ushant and the Isle of Bass : and on the 1st April the Eagle was ordered to Plymouth to strengthen the reinforcement going to Sir Edward Hawke, under the command of Rear Admiral Holburne

8th March.—10 ships of the line were ordered to be fitted out under the command of Admiral Byng to the Mediterranean.

18th March.—Captain Gayton who was then cruising off Cape Barfleur was directed to take the Isis (54) and 3 small vessels under his command and cruise with them from Havre to Cape de la Hague following any orders Vice Admiral Smith should send him.

18th March.—The Falmouth (50), Greyhound (24), and Ferret (10–14) were ordered to proceed to join the Eagle off the Isle of Batz and to cruise with her between that Isle and Ushant.

23rd March.—The Torbay (70), Essex (70), and Antelope (50), with 2 frigates were ordered to cruise off Cherbourg under Captain Keppel.¹ On 1st April, Captain Keppel with Torbay and Essex were ordered to proceed off Plymouth to join the reinforcement going to Sir Edward Hawke under Rear Admiral Holburne.

29th March.—Captain Holmes was ordered to North America with the Grafton (70) and Nottingham (60).

1st April.—Rear Admiral Holburne was ordered with the Terrible (70), Monmouth (70), Essex (70), Torbay (70), and Eagle (60) to reinforce Sir Edward Hawke who was cruising off Brest.

14th April.—The Anson (60) and Bristol (50) were ordered to reinforce the squadron at the Leeward Islands.

20th April.—Vice Admiral Boscawen was ordered with 8 ships, to which on the 22nd the Swiftsure was added, to relieve Sir Edward Hawke off Brest.

[In the circumstances related in the preceding pages, it was claimed that it clearly shewed that 10 ships of the line could not, in the circumstances our affairs were then in, 'consistent with the probable safety of this country, have been sent sooner to the Mediterranean without hazarding these Kingdoms,' and that more ships could not before the 6th April have been spared than the 10 ships which were then sent thither.]

¹ This was in consequence of information received that the Windsor had driven 4 French frigates and about 40 sail of merchant ships into Cherbourg Roads : and Keppel had orders to try and seize them ; if he could not do so, he was to cruise off the port and prevent their sailing ; if the ships had returned to Havre he was to leave 5 ships to cruise off Cape Barfleur and cruise off the Isle of Batz with the remainder,

It is often said, and it strikes men who consider these things superficially, that with so great a fleet as ours, equal if not superior in number of ships to what we have had in any former war, so few were sent during the winter 1755 or spring 1756 to the Mediterranean; whereas there always used to be large squadrons there, and particularly during the late war,¹ in the earlier part of which a great proportion of the English Navy was in the Mediterranean under Admiral Mathews. In answer to which it must be observed that no comparison can be made between the present war and those since the Revolution, in every one of which there was a powerful alliance on the Continent at war with France, which employed the force and finances of that Kingdom and effectually prevented dangerous attempts on us or our Colonies; there were great armies in Flanders which in case of an invasion of Great Britain might easily and immediately have been transported hither, and the larger part of the French navy was at Toulon, in the East Indies and in North America: we had no force at all until the end of the year 1744²; and when the

¹ In the period of strained relations with Spain in 1738, corresponding to those existing in 1755, a fleet was sent to the Mediterranean under Haddock, whose orders related chiefly to covering Minorca from a surprise attack: 'You are without loss of time to proceed to the island of Minorca and use your utmost endeavours to protect the same from any attempts the Spaniards may make thereon.

'And in case you shall find that the Spaniards attempt to attack the aforesaid island of Minorca or come on the coast thereof with any number of ships of war, and land soldiers in order to do the same, you are to do your utmost to frustrate them therein and to seize or destroy such ships as may be employed in such an enterprise.'

² This is not accurate. The fleet which was got to sea on the 14th February 1744, under Sir John Norris, to deal with the attempt at invasion under de Roquefeuil and Barailh, consisted

safety to Minorca during this period is remembered, let the danger of this country in 1743 and 1745, the danger of America in 1740 from the expedition of M. d'Antin which sailed from Europe only because there was not a sufficient Western squadron to prevent it,¹ and the immense losses of our merchants whose ships were taken by hundreds be remembered also ; and let it not be forgotten that all the glories and successes of our navy, with the security of our colonies and commerce, during the last war are dated after the greatest part of the Mediterranean fleet was brought from thence, which enabled us to form and support that western squadron to which they were entirely owing.²

If our possessions and commerce increase, our cares and our difficulties are increased likewise ; that commerce and those possessions being extended all over the world must be defended in every part, and defended by sea, having no other defence. Those distant dominions have in reality

of 18 ships of from 100 to 50 guns : two more of 90 and 60 guns were met in the Downs, and 2 more—a 70 and 50 gun ship—came round from Plymouth, making 23 ships of 100 to 50 guns (of which only 2 were 50's) actually at sea and ready to deal with the French fleet ; and this was four more than the number Norris expected to have, of which he wrote ' a force, I believe, sufficient for the Brest squadron now at sea.'

Twenty-three ships of the line actually at sea can hardly be called ' no force at all.' The Mediterranean fleet, under Mathews, at that time consisted of 29 sail of 60 guns and upwards.

¹ We were not at war with France in 1740, nor had we any declared quarrel with her ; and though it was suspected that D'Antin had sailed with hostile intent, it was wished to postpone France's action, if possible. To have watched Brest with a Western squadron at that time would have been to precipitate France's interference.

² This statement leaves out of account the changed conditions of the war in the later years, the altered conduct of the war in the West Indies, and the reasons why it was possible to withdraw such a large part of the squadron in the Mediterranean.

lessened the security arising from our situation as an island. We are vulnerable there and less invulnerable at home on their account.

It is impossible to keep at all of them, perhaps at any one, a strength equal to what the enemy can send thither ; and therefore the best, indeed the only security, arises from a detention of the enemy's strength in their ports. We did our utmost to prevent attacks from the French ports in the Ocean ; our abilities did not enable us to prevent them from the ports in the Mediterranean also. Since both objects could not be attained, will it be said the defence of the Mediterranean was the most important and should have been preferred to the other ?

In the Mediterranean our possessions were defended by fortifications and garrisons ; Minorca in particular had been strengthening at immense expense for many years, a clear evidence that it was always thought there might be periods when our fleets could not prevent an invasion of that island ; preparations were therefore made for its defence till it could be relieved : however valuable it may be, we have other distant possessions of much greater consequence to keep and more dangerous to lose.¹

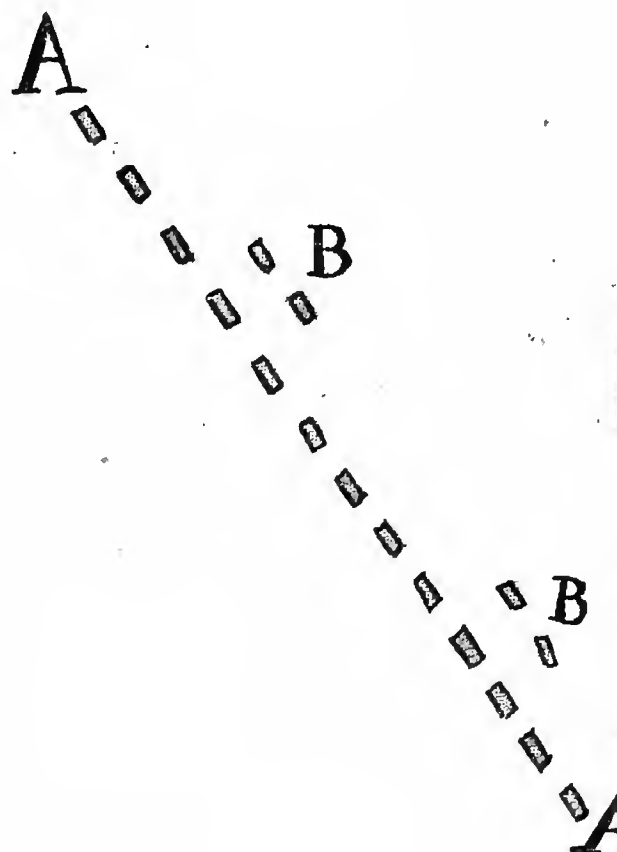
The preparations making at Toulon were not certain indications of an attempt on Minorca or Gibraltar, and the open declarations of France that Minorca was their object argued much more that it was their feint. It is obvious what would

¹ In 1745 when the French sent a force of ships of the line under Caylus to the West Indies, a detachment of six of the line was made from the Mediterranean to go to the Leeward Is. The orders from the Admiralty to make this detachment ended " His Majesty's service in the Mediterranean cannot by any means be thought to be compared with the protecting and defending such valuable possessions to this country."

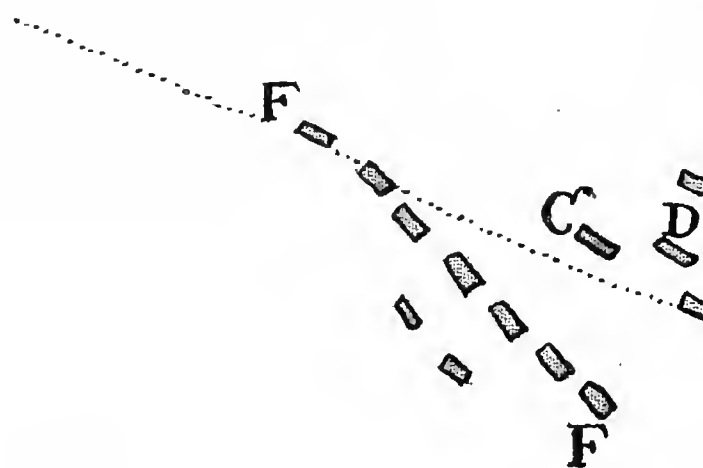
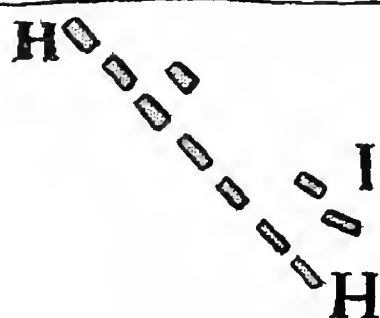
have been said, and said with reason, if the Government had preferred the defence of a Member to a defence of the Heart, and as the French had their choice, undoubtedly in that case the Heart would have been the part attacked. An ignorant man who was to judge of facts from the clamour, instructions or addresses, would imagine that no force at all was sent to the Mediterranean, either to prevent invasion, or to relieve the island if it should be actually attacked; and would be extremely surprised to find the plan of defence laid in the manner set forth in these papers, and that an equal if not superior sea force arrived in full time, when a naval victory, as is confessed in several parts of this intelligence, must have saved the place and ruined the French army: what is become of the skill and valour of this country in sea affairs if nothing can give security or success but such a superiority of force on our part as is unattainable?

A neglect of the colonies is coupled with the neglect of the Mediterranean; whereas the first, were it true, is only a sad argument of our inability to do more for the last. If our fleets had been kept in port when they were able to be at sea, timidity and weakness might be justly charged on the Ministry; but let them stand or fall in the opinion of their country as these facts prove true or false—that no ship has ever remained in port which could go to sea, and that no force has been ever kept on this side Cape Finisterre, which the least timid men of sense would not have thought too small for the defence of everything which is near and dear to us.

85



8 A



REFERENCES TO THE VIEWS OF THE ACTION.

No. 1. *View of the English and French fleets at between 11 and 12 o'clock, wind SW. to W.*

- AA The English fleet with the starboard tacks aboard.
- BB The English frigates.
- CC The French fleet with their larboard tacks aboard laying unformed.

No. 2. *View of the two fleets from $\frac{1}{2}$ -past 1 till 3 in the afternoon, wind SW.*

- AA The English fleet immediately after they had tacked to the westward.
- BB The English fleet after having steered NW.b.W. and NW. agreeable to the signals made for that purpose.
- OOO The course which each ship steered on the signal being made to engage the enemy, who fired as our ships approached them.
- CC Line of engaging to which the 6 ships in the van came and upon which every ship of the squadron ought to have come and might easily have done.
- DD French fleet drawing in a line with their larboard tacks [aboard] and laying to for us under their topsails.
- E The 4th and 5th ships of the enemy's van drove out of the line by the Buckingham and Captain about an hour after the action began.
- FF The English frigates and the Deptford after she had quitted the line by order.
- GG The French frigates.

No. 3. *View of the two fleets from some time after 3 till after 4, wind still SW.*

- A Part of the van of the English fleet, viz. Buckingham, Lancaster, Portland, and Defiance, engaged with the 3 ships of the enemy opposite to them.
- E The 3 ships of the enemy's van going before the wind after they had been drove away by the 4 ships above mentioned.
- F The 4th and 5th ships of the enemy's van that had been before drove away by the Buckingham and Captain.
- CC The enemy's rear making sail on their van run away before the wind.
- BB The rear of the English fleet laying to with their main topsails to the mast.
- D The Captain.

No. 4. *View of the two fleets from after 4 till $\frac{1}{2}$ -past 5, wind still SW.*

- A Lancaster and Portland.
- B Buckingham.
- C Captain.
- D Defiance on the coming up of the enemy's rear.
- FF Rear of the French fleet edging away as they came up and were firing at the Captain, Buckingham, and Defiance, but principally at the two former.
- HH Rear of the English fleet coming up under an easy sail, with the Deptford taken into the line in the room of the Intrepid who had lost her fore-topmast in the action.
- GG The 5 ships of the enemy's van that had ran away.
- LL French frigate.
- I Intrepid and Chesterfield sent to attend her.

No. 5. *View of the same from $\frac{1}{2}$ -past 5 till $\frac{1}{2}$ -past 7, wind still the same.*

- AA The English fleet forming their line.
- BB The French fleet going away large, having two of their ships at some distance astern of them, one of which was crippled.
- E The Intrepid and Chesterfield.

The plan shews our number of ships to be 17 in all, having on board in all 946 great guns and 6,985 men, everybody included. The French had on board their 16 ships, 974 guns, and 9,550 men.¹

¹ The Admiralty claimed that Byng had 950 guns and 7,037 men to 908 guns and 7,040 men on board Galissonnière's fleet.

SIR EDWARD HAWKE'S INSTRUCTIONS.

*By the Commissioners for executing the
Office of Lord High Admiral of Great
Britain and Ireland, &c.*

Instructions for Sir Edward Hawke,
Knight of the Bath, Vice Admiral of
the White, hereby appointed Com-
mander-in-Chief of His Majesty's
Ships and Vessels employ'd in and
about the Mediterranean.

Whereas the King's pleasure has been signified to us that we should give you directions to repair, without loss of time, to the Mediterranean, to supercede Admiral Byng in the command of His Majesty's Ships there ; and that we should appoint some proper Flag Officer to serve under you in the room of Rear Admiral West : You are hereby required and directed forthwith to repair to Portsmouth, and embark on board His Majesty's ship the *Antelope*, together with Rear Admiral Saunders, whom we have directed to proceed with you and serve under your command : And it being intended that Lord Tyrawley, whom the King has appointed Governor of Gibraltar in the room of Lieut. General Fowke, together with the Earl of Panmure (who is going thither in the room of Major General Stuart, who is ordered to be recalled), shall proceed in the same ship : You

are, as soon as those officers are on board, not to lose a moment's time in proceeding to Gibraltar (the Captain of the *Antelope* being directed to follow your orders), and upon your arrival there, you are to deliver the enclosed packets to Admiral Byng and Rear Admiral West, and immediately take upon you the command of all His Majesty's Ships, which you shall find at Gibraltar, and any others that may be in the Mediterranean, all their Officers and Companies being hereby enjoined to a strict obedience to your orders: and hoisting your flag on board such ship as you shall from time to time find convenient, you are to assign any other, which you shall judge most fitting for Rear Admiral Saunders, and to take him also under your command.

You are to make an immediate and expeditious enquiry into the conduct and behaviour of the Captains of the ships hereby put under your command: and if you find any reason to believe any of them to have been tardy, and not to have acted with due spirit and vigour for the Honour and service of the King and nation, You are forthwith to suspend such Captains and appoint others in their stead, in whom you can confide for properly executing their duty.

You are to order the Captain of the *Antelope* to receive Admiral Byng and Rear Admiral West on board, and return with them to Spithead, and if you shall suspend any of the Captains, you are to send them also home in her.

Having done this, if you shall not be well assured that Fort St. Philips upon the Island of Minorca is in possession of the enemy, you are to use the utmost dispatch in repairing thither with your Squadron, and to exert yourself in doing everything that is possible to be done by you for

its relief: and to attack, and use your utmost endeavours to take, sink, burn or otherwise destroy any squadron of the Enemy's ships, that may be employed to favour and assist in their attack upon that Fort.

If you shall find the Enemy have succeeded, and are in full possession of Minorca, you are however to endeavour by all means to destroy the French fleet in the Mediterranean, and for that purpose to employ the ships under your command in the most effectual manner you shall be able, and constantly to keep sufficient cruisers round the Island of Minorca, and take care they exert all possible diligence to prevent the Enemy landing any troops, ammunition, stores or provisions upon that Island, and to annoy and distress them there as much as possible: And, in general, you are to employ the utmost vigilance and vigour to annoy and distress the Enemy everywhere within the Extent of your Command, and by every method and means in your power to protect Gibraltar from any Hostile attempt, and also Minorca, should the present attack upon it miscarry: And you are likewise to give all possible attention to the security of the trade of the King's subjects in and about the Mediterranean and to the taking or destroying any privateers belonging to the Enemy.

If any French Ships of War should escape your Squadron, and proceed out of the Mediterranean, you are forthwith to send to England a proportionable part of the ships under your command observing that you are never to keep more ships in the Mediterranean than shall be necessary for the performance of what is before recommended to you: And, that you may be the better enabled to perform the services expected of you,

you are to take care to keep the ships and vessels under your command in constant good condition, and to have them cleaned as often as shall be requisite for that purpose : And to do the same (if Minorca should be in the Enemy's possession) either in some port in the King of Sardinia's Dominions or at Gibraltar, as shall be most convenient.

And whereas the King's pleasure is signified to Lord Tyrawley, to cause the Troops under his command to be disposed of as he shall see best for His Majesty's Service, and the preservation of his possessions in the Mediterranean and that his Lordship does from time to time embark such Detachments, Stores, Arms and Ammunition, and provisions for the relief of Minorca, as the commanding sea officer in the Mediterranean shall undertake to carry thither, and that he gives such other assistance to the Garrison of St. Philip and Island of Minorca as shall be in his power, consistent with the safety of the Garrison of Gibraltar : You are to consult with Lord Tyrawley in relation to the said particulars, and to co-operate with him in everything that may tend to the Good of the King's service and the preservation of the possessions in the Mediterranean : And Lord Tyrawley being directed to establish an Hospital at Gibraltar, for the relief of sick and wounded men that may be sent thither from time to time from Minorca : You are to cause such men to be transported from that Island to Gibraltar as often as possible.

And Whereas a number of transports will shortly depart from Plymouth, with two Battalions on board for Gibraltar and will be convoyed thither by the Jersey and Gosport : If the situation of matters shall be such as to require your detaining

them or any of them for transporting forces from Gibraltar to Minorca, you are at liberty to keep such as may be wanting, taking care to dismiss and send them to England as soon as the service will admit of so doing, either under convoy of the Antelope, or if she shall be departed, of the first that shall sail afterwards.

In case of your disability, by sickness or otherwise, you are to leave these Instructions, or any others which you receive from us, with Rear-Admiral Saunders, who is hereby required to put the same in execution: And if this case should happen, every Commander of His Majesty's ships and vessels at Gibraltar, and in the Mediterranean, is hereby required and directed to put himself under the command of Rear Admiral Saunders, and follow his orders. Given, &c., the 8th June 1756.

ANSON—W. ROWLEY. BATEMAN.

RD. EDGCUMBE.

By &c.

J. CLEVELAND.

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